Smithsonian

October 1995

Have you seen Brook Shaffer?

The Center for Missing Children wants to know (p. 70)

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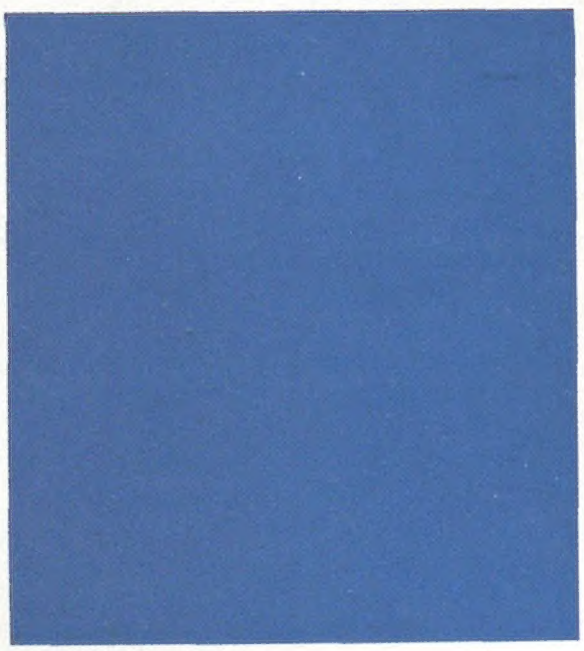

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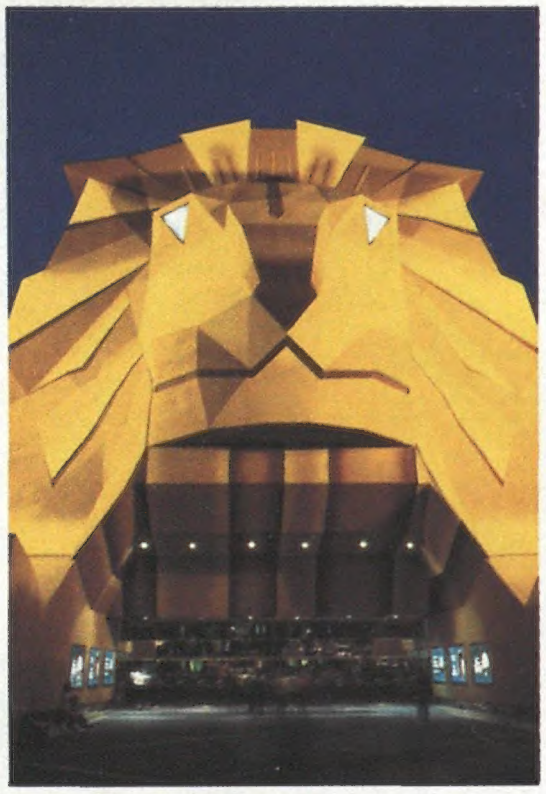
Volume 26, Number 7



50

50 Las Vegas goes from slots to tots
Pirates! Dinos! A fairy-tale castle! The gaming mecca morphs into a theme park as fun-seeking families pour in
By Richard Wolkomir

62 All aboard for 'The Last Steam Railroad in America'
The trains of the Norfolk and Western Line roll once more, in the spectacular photographs of O. Winston Link

70 The child-finders blend high tech and high purpose
At its computerized offices in Virginia, a nonprofit agency coordinates nationwide searches for missing youngsters
By Donald Dale Jackson, photographs by Kay Chernush

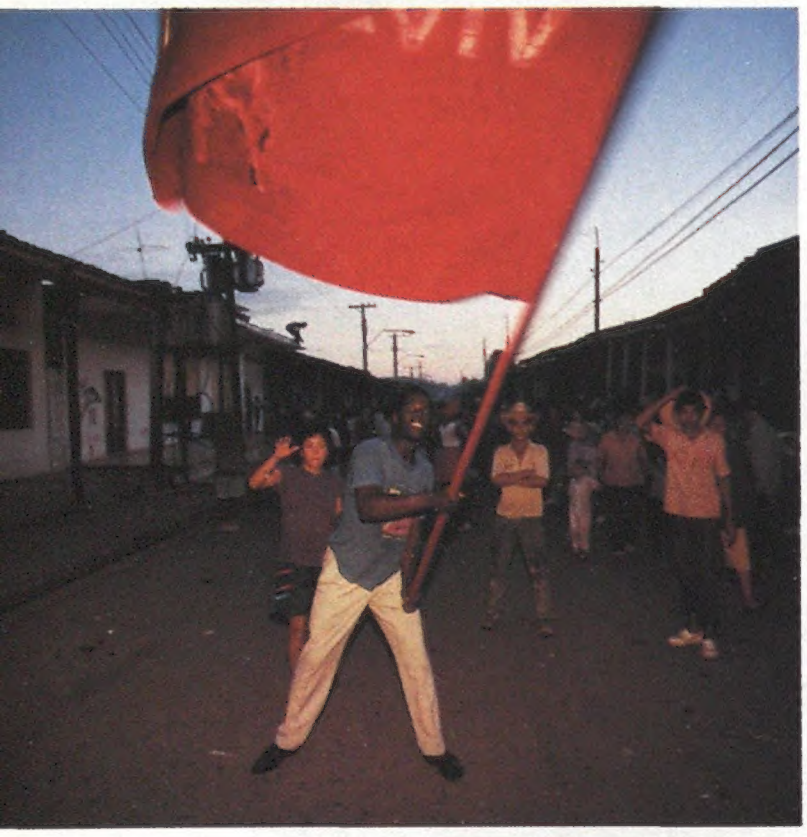
89 Weeklies: where we go to 'read all about it'
Local papers like the *Rio Grande Sun* may not look like much, but they print the news that matters to people
By Richard Conniff, photographs by Will van Overbeek

102 At Italy's Pordenone, a celebration of silents
Silent-film devotees convene to view survivors of an art medium that's coming, with luck, to a theater near you
By Kenneth Turan

116 A sea change: the life and art of Winslow Homer
His paintings were a social history of the nation until a personal crisis sent him into seclusion on the Maine coast
By Ken Chowder

130 'Enriquito, don't you know who I am?'
A Cuban-American finds long-lost family, and himself, on a sentimental journey to his ancestral home in Cuba
By Enrique Fernandez, photographs by Claudio Edinger

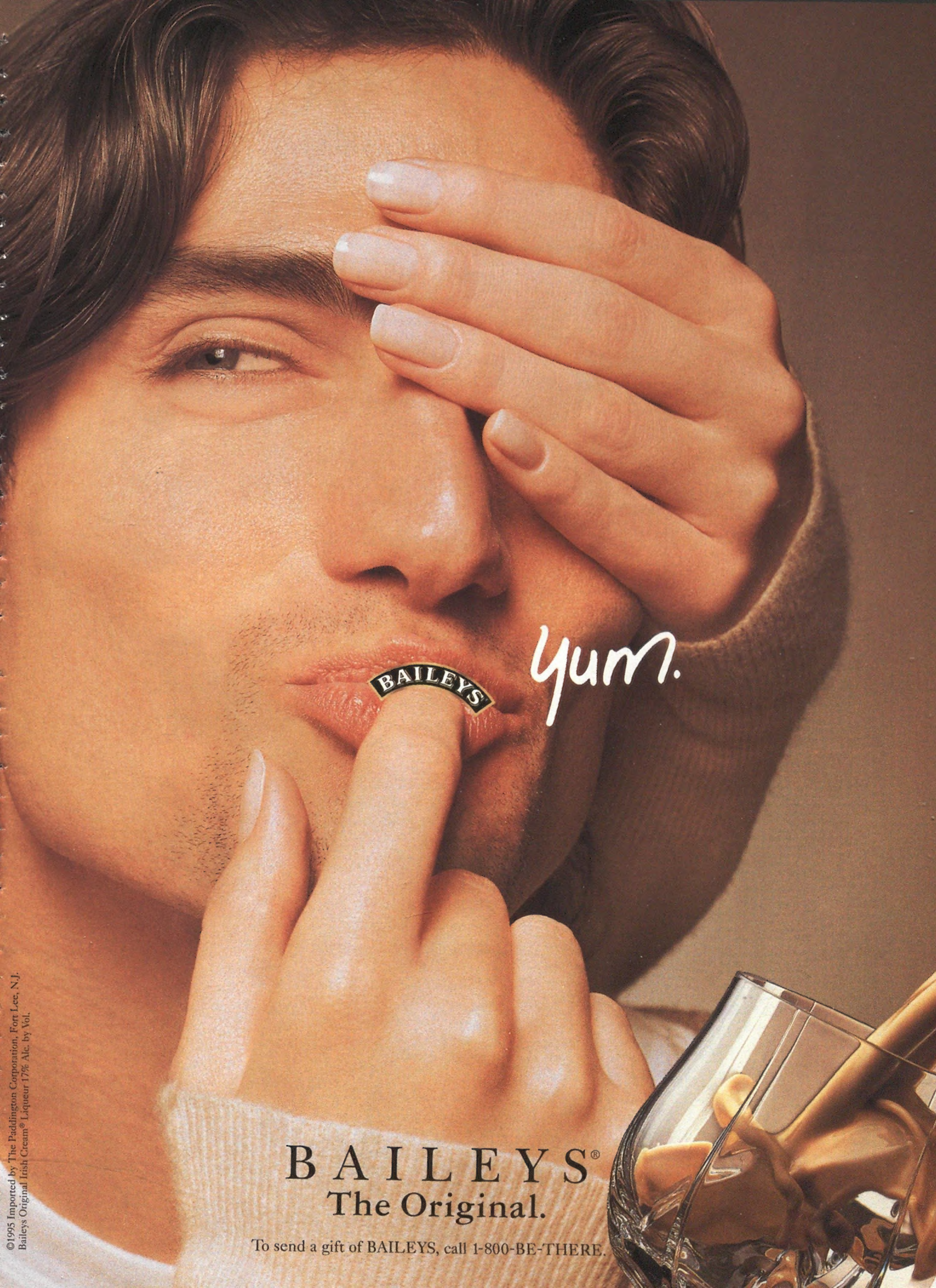
142 The armadillo is not just another pretty face
On the scale of evolutionary intelligence, that tiny amphibious-tank-of-a-mammal is a brilliant survivor
By Bil Gilbert



130

116

Continued on page 8



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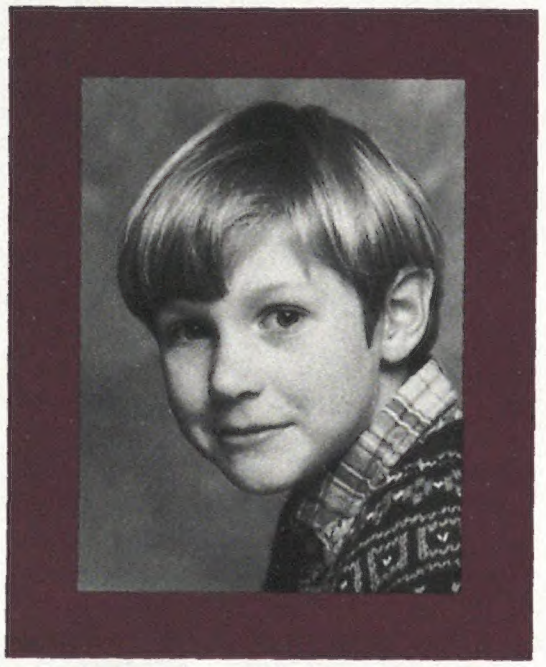

Cover

Cover:
Brook Shaffer, now 10, was living in Paris with his father when his mother took him to Cincinnati, Ohio. The two vanished in July 1994. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is looking for him (p. 70)

20 *Letters to the Editor*
163 *Picture Credits*
164 *Additional Sources*
166 *Smithsonian Study Tours and Seminars*

16 Smithsonian Perspectives
New roles for the Zoo and Conservation & Research Center
By Secretary Heyman

24 The Object at Hand
Used to be, for a swinging time, Presidents carried canes
By Edwards Park

28 Phenomena, Comment and Notes
A salute to medical miracles from a heart-attack survivor
By John P. Wiley jr.

32 Around the Mall and Beyond
A trip to the Smithsonian on the World Wide Web
By Michael Kernan

38 Smithsonian Highlights: a calendar of events
44 *Highlights Continued:* "Secrets of the Dark Chamber: The Art of the American Daguerreotype" (through October 29)

152 Book Reviews
Peculiar People: The Story of My Life by Augustus Hare
Scenes from the Life of a City by Eric Homberger
Tales My Father Never Told by Walter D. Edmonds

168 'They forced martinis down my throat . . .'
By Robert W. Creamer

44

168

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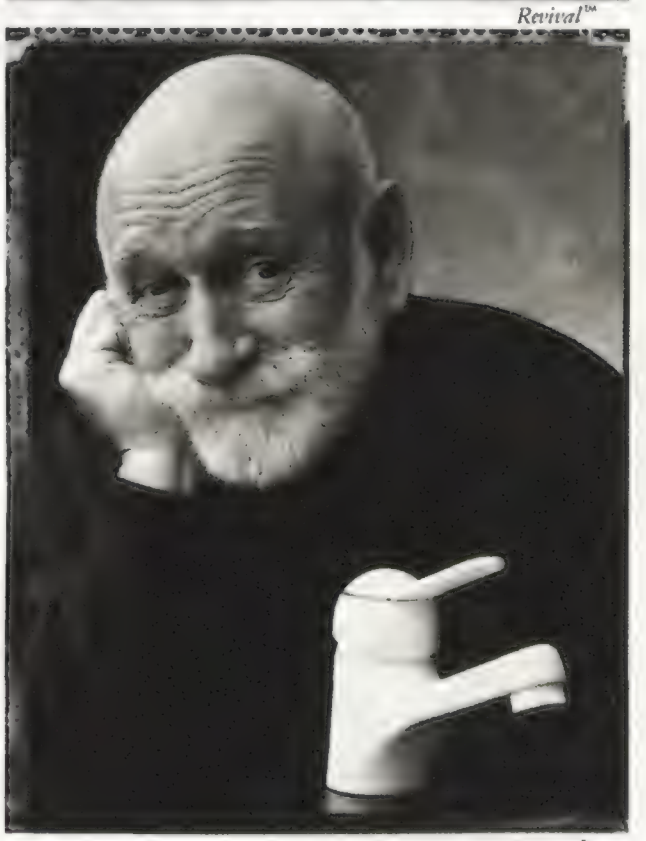

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Secretary Heyman's comments

Smithsonian Perspectives

The National Zoo and its branch, the CRC, pioneer conservation biology and seek new ways of support

The Smithsonian Institution provides me never-ending wonderment in the scale and depth of its activities. My latest adventure was a visit to the Conservation & Research Center (CRC), which is a branch of the National Zoological Park—the Zoo—in Rock Creek Park. The NZP and the CRC are yet another example of how the Smithsonian, over time, grows, adapts and extends its activities, usually at the prodding of members of the staff who have interesting ideas.

The Zoo was the idea of a 19th-century taxidermist, William Hornaday, who convinced Secretary Samuel P. Langley that the space immediately to the south of the Castle (where the Enid A. Haupt Garden is now located) ought to be occupied by live mammals of North America. And so it came to pass that the Smithsonian Institution created a zoo of sorts—to accompany exhibitions of stuffed animals. From that modest origin eventually emerged the National Zoo and the Institution nurtured yet again a new function.

The NZP-CRC is a "natural" outcome of such an undertaking by the Smithsonian. Simple exhibition is insufficient in much the same way that teaching without accompanying research is too thin a menu for prestigious colleges and universities. Our museums combine exhibition with historical and analytical research concerning the artifacts, their contextual history, their care and conservation and, often, subject matters in fields related to the collections.

Not surprisingly, the National Zoo's CRC has a similar agenda focusing on the "collection." Founded in 1975 in Front Royal, Virginia, the CRC is interested in zoo-management practices, healthy environments for animals in zoos, and exemplary techniques of veterinary medicine. But this is only the beginning. The CRC, like its parent, is also concerned with the maintenance of habitat for various creatures and the training of personnel, especially in Third World countries where one finds most of the rarest animals extant. This has led to a concentrated effort to protect and enhance endangered animal species, identify critical habitats and develop habitat-management techniques designed for these ends.

The CRC and the Zoo are thus leaders in the relatively new field of conservation biology, and their activities relate to similar ecological undertakings at the National Museum of Natural History, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center on the Chesapeake Bay, and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, in Panama.

The CRC's activities have been extended to more general training and research on supportive techniques, such as radio telemetry, microcomputer applications, geographical information systems, wildlife-survey techniques, protected-areas management and others.

A chief activity of the CRC is spawning its collection (by natural breeding and artificial insemination) as well as producing members of endangered species for other zoos and for release in the wild. A good example of the latter is the black-footed ferret, which the CRC is breeding with success for return to habitats in Wyoming and nearby states, from which they had largely disappeared. Similarly, exotic animals are being bred, including clouded leopards, tree kangaroos, red pandas, maned wolves, various ungulates and a number of tropical birds.

The CRC exemplifies an important aspect of the depth and excitement of the Smithsonian mission. Its activities directly enhance the survivorship of endangered species in the wild as well as train field personnel involved in their preservation. The Institution today is also heartily engaged in providing public education and enjoyment through myriad other exhibitions and programs.

The CRC also exemplifies the fiscal challenge that the Smithsonian faces as a whole. About 75 percent of the Institution's budget comes from direct federal appropriations. An additional amount comes from federal research funds for which scholars in the Institution compete. It is quite likely that our federal funding will erode as Congress and the President seek to erase the deficit. The Smithsonian is still a favored "agency" in the sense that we will not be dealt with as harshly as some others. But it seems clear that we will continue to be vulnerable to cuts in our base budget.

We are currently taking a deep look at our multiple activities. We will probably have to reduce our expenditure of federal funds for salaries and expenses. Some of the saving will occur through efficiency measures, such as consolidations and reductions in administration. The future of our programs, however, will be largely determined by our ability to raise new funds to replace lost federal funding.

The NZP-CRC can provide a place where various alternative funding sources are explored, created and enhanced. Already more than 50 percent of its operating budget comes from sources other than the Institution's federal appropriation. It has developed research grants from foundations and other privately run organizations. It has charged tuition for many of its training programs. It has developed with the Zoo support group—Friends of the National Zoo—a source of private funding for its summer camp for youth. There are other possibilities.

Whether the Smithsonian Institution can maintain its depth, quality, accessibility and breadth in the future will depend on skillful development of alternative sources of financial support. The Zoo and the CRC—especially given its relative youth and flexibility—can usefully explore such sources.

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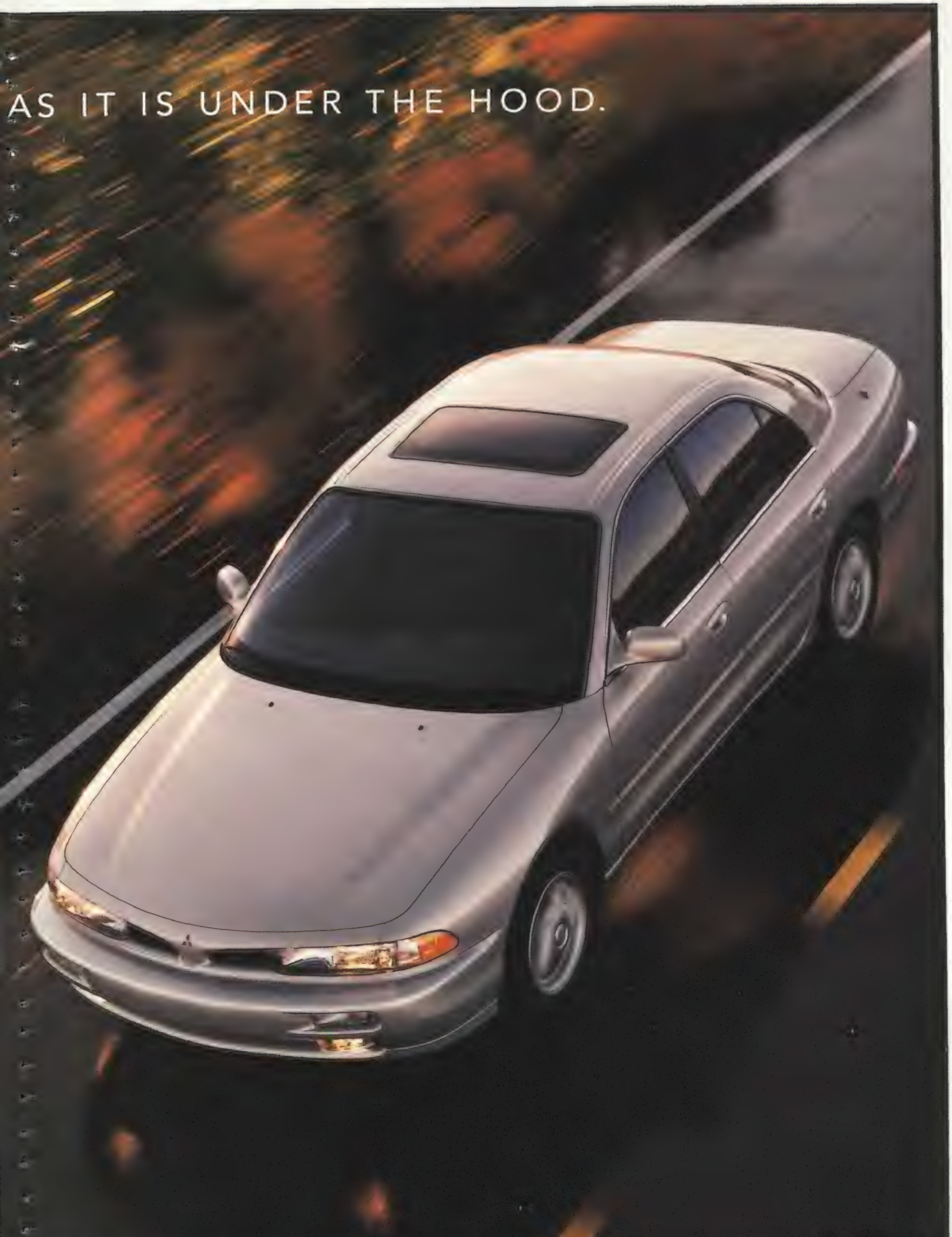

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Letters to the Editor

Art Cars

Dear Sir: I reveled in the photo essay by Tom Ives with text by Lucinda Moore that appeared in August. No serious discussion of art cars can take place, however, without mentioning the genre's champion, Harrod Blank.

In your August *Additional Sources* you cited *Wild Wheels*, the artist-filmmaker's acclaimed 1992 documentary and companion book about the art-car culture. Both featured more than 40 art cars with commentary by their creators. Les Blank, renowned documentary filmmaker (*Burden of Dreams*; *Gap-Toothed Women*) served as one of his son's cinematographers.

Harrod Blank's current project involves his *Camera Van* (below). He riveted and glued 1,705 still and video cameras to an old Dodge Tradesman and then wired some of them to capture the candid reactions of onlookers. He's working on a book about the van and the pictures it takes, called *I've Got a Vision*. Blank's long-term goal is to take the *Camera Van* around the world.
William Bee
Austin, Texas

The U.S. Coast Guard's Eagle

Dear Sir: Ten years ago I was one of the cadets who sailed and trained aboard the U.S.C.G.C. *Eagle*. Some of the cadets who sailed with me are now the fine officers who are training today's cadets. We gained a lifetime of knowledge about seamanship, sailing and ourselves during those summers. I especially remember the lessons learned simply by observing our commanding officer, Capt. Ernst Cummings. Thank you for bringing back wonderful memories.
Maria A. Simmons
Bremerton, Washington

Dear Sir: The drought is over. I had thought the era of first-class prose in SMITHSONIAN was over, but the appearance of Russell Drumm gives hope that the halcyon days are not gone. Thank him for us hoary sailors and hoarier English teachers.
Virginia O'Roak
Manassas, Virginia

Dear Sir: Sometime at Midwatch, 0000 to 0400 hours, "Lieut. Eric Jones raises his sextant to shoot Arcturus in order to compute latitude Captain Bligh-style" (see page 30). Despite the portable global positioner in his hip pocket, Jones "chooses to move Arcturus from the dome of the celestial sphere to the horizon by hand." In my callow youth in the U.S. Navy circa 50 years ago, a mariner could see Arcturus *and* the horizon only about halfway through morning or evening twilight. If Jones had wanted to check *Eagle*'s latitude, he should have done so at local apparent noon when the sun is due south, and within the equation of time before or after "eight bells."

Nonetheless, a delightful article.
Ed Walshe, Commander, U.S.N. (Ret.)
Norfolk, Virginia

Dear Sir: As a reserve officer candidate at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1943, I found myself at the end of a four-month course aboard the Danish three-masted schooner *Danmark*. It was a bitterly cold January in New London, yet we were issued only summer whites and pea jackets. I did little else each day other than climb up the mizzenmast, heart in mouth, to furl and unfurl the topmost sail with one hand, while holding on to the spar for dear life with the other. It seemed an especially peculiar way to prepare a newly minted ensign for his first tour of duty—18 months in the Pacific during World War II as a gunnery officer aboard an LST (landing ship tank).

Fifty-two years later the subhead in Russell Drumm's article explained the purpose of that long, cold month's training. I was learning by doing, to "earn humility."
Morris Nierman
Silver Spring, Maryland

Robert Louis Stevenson

Dear Sir: Simon Winchester's article on Robert Louis Stevenson reminded me of a story my father used to tell of a storekeeper in the West Texas town where he grew up. The man was con-

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cerned that the town's small boys were reading the "penny dreadfuls" that he kept on display. These novels were mild by today's standards, but the storekeeper felt they were not the best literature for the young. He also knew better than to try a frontal attack. He got a few of the boys together and, speaking in low tones, told them he had a really hot story that he would let them read provided they not let their parents know. The book was passed around and read by every boy in town. The title: *Treasure Island.*
Polly B. Johnson
San Antonio

Dear Sir: Any child not reared with RLS was and is surely deprived of imagination's nourishment at its best.
Mrs. Fred H. Layman sr.
Salwa, Oregon

Dear Sir: While RLS was residing in San Francisco, he introduced my grandparents to each other. Edward Young was a youthful lawyer doing some business with RLS; Carrie Stone was the oldest sister of a man who lived at the same boarding house as RLS. Edward and Carrie fell in love, married and had two sons, the younger of whom was my father. When Stevenson's wife, Fanny, returned to San Francisco years later, my grandmother took my father, then 6, to meet her. Dad said he recalled a lady dressed all in white, smoking a cigar.

As a wedding present, RLS sent my grandparents a Samoan war club that I now have, which makes quite a conversation piece.
Betsy Ann Young
Bakersfield, California

Dear Sir: The RLS account of Sir Walter Grindlay Simpson and his journey made from Antwerp to Pontoise was entitled *An Inland Voyage,* not *Island* as your article stated.
Constance Pike
Old Lyme, Connecticut

Dear Sir: Two days before receiving the August issue I had just finished reading Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez's lively and fascinating 1919 biography of her sister, *Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson* (Scribner's). A more recent biography by novelist Alexandra Lapierre entitled *Fanny Stevenson: A Romance of Destiny* (Carroll & Graf) was published last February.
Katharine L. Brown
Gladwyne, Pennsylvania

Dear Sir: The Robert Louis Stevenson Museum/Preservation Foundation, which leased RLS's house in Samoa for one coconut a year and renovated it for more than $2 million, has no connection with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). Although its founding directors were Mormon missionaries in Samoa, the foundation's management is nicely represented by a multidenominational roster. Our interest in RLS continues to be superseded by a continuing love of things Samoan that overlap with RLS, such as culture, language, history, music, dance and food. We have learned to love RLS along the way.
James S. Winegar, President
Robert Louis Stevenson Museum/
Preservation Foundation
Phoenix

Dear Sir: Readers who rejoiced in *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped* will chuckle throughout the 1966 comedy film *The Black Box,* which was suggested by the novel of the same name, written by RLS and his stepson. The comedy stars John Mills, Sir Ralph Richardson, Michael Caine, Peter Cooke, Dudley Moore, Peter Sellers and Nanette Newman.
J. Z. Fullmer
Columbus, Ohio

Claes Oldenburg

Dear Sir: In her essay on Claes Oldenburg, Beth Py-Lieberman states that since 1976 the former conceptual artist and his wife, Coosje van Bruggen, "have conspired to bring really big sculptures of really ordinary things to public places." Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, but a critical look at Oldenburg's 45-foot-tall *Clothespin* on page 83 of the August issue persuades me it would not hold anything to a clothesline. In fact, it looks like a couple embracing. Or, as my young daughter Shelby said upon first seeing it as we rounded the corner, "Oh, look at the two people kissing."
R. Thayer Bullitt
Philadelphia

Michael Moschen

Dear Sir: Juggler Michael Moschen is definitely a genius and Steve Kemper's article and Wayne Sorce's photographs were an absolute pleasure. I was tickled, however, by Moschen's use of 1½-pound crystal balls. Every year my friend Jane Black performs a birthday stunt for her friends. This year she trained for 2½ months before juggling three shot put balls for 43 complete revolutions. Each ball weighs 6 pounds. Years of weightlifting and three World Master's Olympic Lifting records helped her with the required basic strength; her tenacity and sense of the ridiculous enabled her to succeed.
Stephanie Miller
Atlanta

Highlights Continued

Dear Sir: Diane Bolz's column "The lively art of 1950s wallpaper" reminded me of the last words attributed to Oscar Wilde as he lay dying in a dreary Paris hotel: "My wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to the death. One or the other of us has to go."
Eduardo David
San Miguel de Allende, Mexico

Dear Sir: The *Highlights Continued* column gave credence to my childhood lament, "Is that all there is?" I hated my bedroom wallpaper—brown with pink chickens. Years later my mother told me, "That was all that was available in the 1950s." Deep down I knew she had been artistically misinformed. If only I could have lived those 14 years with Henri Matisse or Alexander Calder.
Candy Leach
Grass Valley, California

Around the Mall

Dear Sir: I enjoyed Michael Kernan's account of the Smithsonian Institution's Butterfly Garden. In 1992, U. S. Steel's Clairton (Pennsylvania) Works planted the only known garden at a coke-producing plant in the United States that was specifically designed to attract butterflies. Although it lacks the size of the Smithsonian garden, it is thoughtfully cared for by both the YWCA Garden Club of McKeesport and steelworkers. We have identified painted ladies, monarchs, swallowtails, white cabbage and sulfur cabbage butterflies.
Gerald Cornell, Editor
U. S. Steel News
Pittsburgh

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The Object at Hand

By Edwards Park

There was a time when a cane was the exclamation point to a true gentleman's attire, but canes have also been put to a remarkable range of uses, quite a few antisocial

President Harding's black dress cane holds court with an assortment of walking sticks, including bird's head, dice cane and beaded model from Cameroon.

The object at hand is a cane—slender yet strong, gleaming black, its handle widely arched to fit a big hand. The perfect accessory for a man with gracefully silvered hair, strikingly black eyebrows and steely eyes. A man with character in his face. A man who looks as if he should be President of the United States.

Such a man was Warren Gamaliel Harding, owner of the black cane. Unfortunately, it was Harding who gave us the Teapot Dome Scandal, and once blurted out, "I am not fit for this office and should never have been here." But no President more ideally looked the part. "If he had been wearing a toga instead of a double-breasted chesterfield," a biographer once described Harding at his 1921 Inauguration, "he could have stepped on stage in a production of *Julius Caesar*."

In Harding's time a true gentleman couldn't face dinner without dressing for it, nor step outside without a cane to add what the Smithsonian's David Shayt calls an "exclamation point" to his attire. Shayt specializes in everyday objects, including canes, at the National Museum of American History (NMAH). He admires Harding's black cane and notes that Presidents always used to carry canes, and they still get them as gifts. Since the early days of the Republic, ceremonial canes have been presented to newly elected Presidents. Some of these Presidential canes are now on display at the museum's "Ceremonial Court" exhibit.

Old Hickory himself, President Andrew Jackson—wouldn't you know it—owned a sword cane (perhaps made of hickory), though it was probably another stick that he used to destroy the arrow-straight line originally planned for Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue. The story goes that when asked where the Treasury Building should go, Jackson banged his stick testily on the ground and said, "Build it here!" He was right in the middle of the avenue and they took him literally.

The Smithsonian now has a cane that Ben Franklin bequeathed to George Washington, a splendid stick with a gold-headed handle in the shape of a French liberty cap. A more decorative gold knob adorns another historic cane that the Smithsonian does *not* have. With it, in 1856, Congressman Preston Brooks of proslavery South Carolina beat Senator Charles Sumner of abolitionist Massachusetts almost to death. Sumner took years to recover from the beating; Brooks was expelled from the House and then re-elected. The cane is in Boston, and you can see the dents on its handle.

Walking sticks have been with us since Homo sapiens first hacked off a straight branch, to discourage attack or bop a rival on the head. Those distant ancestors doubtless found sticks helpful as well for pointing out a direction, tracing a diagram in the dirt or prying up a slab of useful flint.

Ever since, though walking sticks have faded in and out of fashion, they have always been put to pretty much the same uses by humankind. The halt and lame still walk with their help. The young and hale still probe their way across mountain streams with hiking staffs, though nobody takes whacks at folk crossing in the other direction, as Robin Hood and Little John once did.

Fashionable people of the early 1920s used to tuck a cane under an arm, wave it cheerily at friends and often whirl it in circles as they strode city sidewalks. The older and less-cheery found canes well suited for angry flourishing. Bostonian lore cherishes the way in which Charles W. Eliot, Harvard's redoubtable president, used to cross busy Beacon Street during rush hour. He'd simply step off the curb and bring the carriage traffic to a clattering, cursing

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halt with an imperious wave of his cane.

"Can't you picture a very grande dame shaking this one at a rude driver of a hansom cab?" asks David Shayt, fingering a delicate, formal cane with a silver handle, a part of the Smithsonian collection. The Institution has more than 2,000 canes but displays only a dozen or so at any one time. Besides those at NMAH, canes are now on exhibit at the National Museum of American Art and the National Museum of African Art.

African canes tend to bear highly symbolic carvings; they have been traditional badges of power since the ancient dynasties of Egypt. Archaeologists found 130 canes buried with King Tutankhamun, and African canes still sometimes denote the position, purpose, religion and everyday life of their carriers. Early African-American folk artists tended to carve cane handles into heads or faces. Asian canes are often made from bamboo with ivory, mother-of-pearl or mahogany handles, carved to represent monkeys, elephants, birds and lizards.

In North America, Native Americans have a long association with canes. Woodcarver Bill Cooey of Milton, Florida, himself part Yuchi, cites the planting stick, sharply tipped for sowing seeds, and usually carved with the likeness of a "corn maiden." The shaman's staff, frequently carved with a totem, was a symbol of magical power. By waving it at some obstreperous person, the shaman might visit him with rotten luck or a bad hair day.

There were prayer sticks, medicine sticks, story sticks (with carvings that told a history) and "talking" sticks (passed around at council meetings), a neat conversational device because only the person holding the stick could talk. With a coup stick, a warrior would touch an enemy before killing him, then carve a notch on the shaft. A booger bones stick, its carving as weird as its name, was used to scare off intruders. "Very good to hang on your girl's door when you visited," says Cooey.

Naturally, canes in every society have mostly been made out of wood—most often mahogany, ebony, maple, holly, ash, beech and hickory. The material that has lent its name to the canes created from it is malacca. Malacca is a natural cane that grows strong and straight—making it a perfect walking stick—but it is harder to carve than other woods.

Canes have always been objets d'art, too. American folk artists often carved a snake climbing a cane's shaft, sometimes ending in a snake's-head handle. Perfect for a herpetologist. Naturally carvings are apt to reflect an owner's interests: birds for naturalists, cannon for soldiers, a woman's hand for a great lover, even dice for "The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo."

Almost every sturdy material that can be carved or molded has been made into a cane. On long cruises bored whalers often passed the time turning whale bone and teeth into cane handles rich with scrimshaw for the folks back in New Bedford or Nantucket. Some cane materials take your breath away. Human bones, for instance, are found in a few canes owned by Civil War veterans. The ball joint of a femur, it turns out, forms a splendid handle. Other Smithsonian canes include pink and white marble, porcelain, even blown glass—a brittle but classy cane for a showy appearance at the opera. The short horns or tusks of some animals, such as warthogs and hippos, were frequently used as cane handles precisely because they didn't need to be carved.

The commonest curve for a cane is the rounded arc of a shepherd's crook, designed to snag a single sheep from a herd. A narrower, hairpin curve allowed the shepherd to grab the animal by one leg—less traumatic than by the head. This model is known as a "leg cleek," related to "cleek," an old name for a midiron. It resembles a narrowly hooked walking stick.

Sword canes—like the one cantankerous Andrew Jackson wielded—flash through literature and life. Press a button on the shaft and the deadly blade springs from the tip. The Smithsonian has many varieties; one is made from a French bayonet. Naturally it would be prohibited in any state that outlaws the wearing of concealed weapons. Gun canes fired cartridges at the touch of a well-concealed trigger. But Shayt is most intrigued with a weapon known as the "life preserver." It was a club cane. When pulled from its swordlike shaft, a heavy coil of steel whipped back and forth, smashing anything in its way like a superlong blackjack. Crowd protection of another sort was provided in Tudor times by a combined walking stick and pouncet box that released a pleasant fragrance—to neutralize the smell of Elizabethan London.

Really utilitarian canes came along with the 19th century. Canes held microscopes, traveling kits (shaving gear for men and makeup for women), saw blades, pills and medicine, compasses, watches, sundials, and vials known as "nip sticks"—for bootlegged booze. Old-fashioned politics often called for noisy processions: many paraders carried canes with small charges that ignited when the bearer banged the cane on the ground. There were also spitting canes, their heads filled with water, that could squirt a jet of it at the tweak of a lever.

Suitably caned, Harding (right) toured West Point with personal secretary and Attorney General Harry Daugherty (left).

Warren Harding seems to have owned 25 canes, which even in his time probably made him a minor collector. His fancy black cane very likely supported him toward the end, on his last journey, a political tour as far as Alaska that ended with his death in San Francisco in August 1923. If that cane saw Harding's gradual collapse, it probably witnessed more intimate moments. One of the self-indulgent short-term President's peccadillos was his six-year dalliance with pretty Nan Britton. Their trysts, she said, occurred right in the White House, in a small room near Harding's office, "a place," Nan noted, "for hats and coats."

Not to mention canes. It's easy to picture two or three of them hanging there in the dark among the winter chesterfields and summer straw hats. If canes could only talk!

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Phenomena, Comment and Notes

By John P. Wiley jr.

For millions with heart problems, an age of miracles has come. Doctors now routinely stop heart attacks and prevent recurrences in ways that would have been considered magic 50 years ago

In any age of miracles, miracles become boring. We become as accustomed to them as we do to everything else in our lives and save our interest and excitement for things that appear new and different. As moviegoers were reminded last summer, humanity's third trip to the moon was so ho-hum that television networks did not pay much attention, at least not until that chilling "Houston, we've had a problem."

Every once in a while, though, we remember that we all live always in an age of miracles. Some are natural. Look up in time to see clouds turn pink, red, orange, purple. A cliché. Ah, but imagine if sunsets happened only once every 50 years. People would build their lives around them. Look at a baby. No news there. Not only are 88 million people born every year, but each one of us was, too. Yet every time I hold my new granddaughter and wonder just how small the capillaries in her little fingers really are, it's quite clear to me that I am in the presence of a miracle.

Then there are the miracles that we humans have been able to pull off. As in, say, medical miracles. Despite all the illnesses and injuries that doctors still cannot cure or heal, miracles are happening nonstop everywhere. Take my recent history. The faithful have noticed my name missing from this column most of the past year and a half. It all had to do with a heart attack and its ensuing complications. The physician who delivered me nearly 60 years ago would be astounded that I survived, and absolutely dumbfounded at the tools available to his counterparts of today.

Most heart attacks occur when a blood clot closes off one of the coronary arteries that feed blood to the heart muscle itself. All the muscle downstream from the blockage is cut off and, without help, will die in a matter of hours. Today, however, when conditions are right, doctors can inject compounds that will dissolve the clot in time to avoid much of the damage. The one most commonly used, known as tPA, is a substance that occurs naturally in the body—but only in minute quantities. No problem. Nowadays genetically engineered bacteria in fermentation tanks turn out the stuff by the barrelful. My heart attack is stopped. Some damage has been done, but it could have been worse—as in fatal.

Presumably that narrowed artery is still just as narrow, and another clot could come along at any time. The doctors want to know how much damage has been done, and which artery is blocked and where. All along they have been taking electrocardiograms, which record the electrical signals from the heart's muscle activity on a moving chart. Next is an echocardiogram, which works much like the sonograms that let us "see" unborn babies. The image on the monitor looks like a storm on a toroidal sea. The machine is bouncing inaudible, very high frequency sound waves off the pulsing heart to form an image. The physician can actually see which parts of the heart are working well and which are not.

Only the beginning. Now the patient is wheeled into the nuclear medicine department for a thallium stress test.

At the tip of a guide wire is the balloon that will be inflated to open an artery.

Thallium is an obscure, poisonous metal. In one form it is radioactive, constantly giving off high-energy gamma rays. For the test you are wired up to the electrocardiograph and an IV line is stuck into your arm. You walk on a treadmill, faster and faster, until you and the doctor agree you have had enough. Then the thallium is injected through the IV line, and you lie down on a table shaped like a trough to keep you as still as possible. The thallium attaches itself to red blood cells and will show which parts of the heart are getting a good blood supply and which are not. You are now a radioactive source, spewing out gamma rays in all directions. A scintillation camera, a device borrowed from the physicists, records the location each time a gamma-ray photon strikes it. (If the angle is right, you can watch the image take shape on a monitor.)

The thallium stress test is best at looking at the walls of the heart. Another, similar test is best for determining how well the heart is pumping. Doctors want to know what the ejection fraction is, how much of the blood present in the

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The Wonder of Iron-4

Important food tips: Cook with iron utensils. And vitamin C and meat increase your iron absorption rate.

Iron and Food

By Dr. Yoshiko Kagawa

Most iron loss occurs through the shedding of cells from the skin or digestive tract, and results in a loss rate of about 14 micrograms per each kilogram of weight per day. A person weighing 70kg (154 lbs.) needs to absorb about 1 milligram (mg) of iron daily. The iron contained in a day's food comes to 10–15mg, which seems quite enough. However, the actual absorption rate varies dramatically between 1% and 30% depending on a person's food intake and existing iron level.

In general, when the body has a sufficiency of iron, the absorption rate is low, and when the store is low, the absorption rate increases. Absorption is sometimes more than doubled by intaking vitamin C or by eating meat. Together, both can sometimes quadruple iron absorption.

Iron is more important for women than men, since women lose an average about 0.5mg of iron daily during menstruation. Since women eat less than men, many women suffer from iron deficiency anemia, especially in advanced countries where much of the food is refined and iron tends to be removed.

Foods with high iron content include liver (13–14mg per 100g), spinach (4mg per 100g), and soybeans (9.4mg per 100g). One way to add iron to food is simply use iron cooking utensils, so that iron dissolves into the food. Iron transfer is particularly effective with tomato products or vinegar, and in dishes which simmer a long time. In spaghetti meat sauce, for example, the transfer of iron to the sauce can be as high as 80mg per 100g. Studies have shown that in Japanese schools, iron intake from school lunches has almost doubled due to the use of iron cooking pans. Well-used and well-scrubbed iron pans and utensils are most effective in increasing iron absorption.

About the Author:
Dr. Kagawa received her Ph.D. in medicine from the University of Tokyo and a masters degree in science from the University of California. She became a professor at Kagawa Nutrition University in Tokyo and was named president of the school in 1990.

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left ventricle is pushed out to the body when the ventricle contracts. In a healthy person, this is around 60 percent (mine is down to 30). The main difference is that this time another radioactive element, technetium, is used in place of thallium.

The general practitioner who had delivered me had sat by the bed of many a coronary victim, with absolutely no way to "see" where and how bad the damage was. He also had no way of seeing which coronary artery was blocked where, much less a way of fixing it. If he could have watched over the shoulder of one of today's interventional cardiologists, he might well have muttered "miracle."

Nowadays cardiac catheterization is routine. The doctor inserts the catheter into an artery that is conveniently near the surface in the groin. Guided by x-ray images, he works the catheter upstream until it is in the aorta, the finger-size blood vessel through which oxygenated blood first exits the heart proper. From here the doctor can actually go into the heart or turn the catheter down one of the coronary arteries. He then squirts a dye that is opaque to x rays out the tip of the catheter, so whatever he is looking at will stand out on the fluoroscope.

In my case the villain turned out to be an artery that moves down the front surface of the heart, the left anterior descending, a.k.a. the widowmaker. Its silhouette changed abruptly from the thickness of a straw to the thickness of a thread. Not only was almost nothing getting through, but even a small clot could cause another heart attack. I had already had four, and thus the diagnostic thoroughness. Decisions were made. A few weeks later, when my heart had had a chance to heal a little, my own interventional cardiologist went ahead with angioplasty. He worked another catheter up into the blockage, then threaded a wire with a deflated balloon at the tip through the catheter. He slowly inflated the balloon to mash the mess of cholesterol, foam cells and even swollen cells from the artery lining itself back into the walls of the artery to open up the middle, the opening through which blood could flow. Again and again he advanced the balloon and inflated it, burrowing a new channel and a new lease on life for me.

And so I went home, with my heart healing and all systems go. My age of miracles was not yet over, however. As

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happens with 40 percent or so of even the best angioplasties, the artery began to close again five months later. My doctor inserted a catheter, shot some dye and decided that the newly blocked portion was too long and damaged to repeat the balloon procedure. So I went by ambulance to a large medical center to try something so new it was then still called research. Here the doctors inserted a catheter through the groin on the other side and slowly opened the blockage with a balloon, but they also popped open some stainless-steel supports called stents as they moved along. Now the artery was propped open as strongly (relatively speaking) as a New York subway tunnel.

Unfortunately, as I learned three months later, stents sometimes fill with scar tissue. My man slid in a catheter, took a look and sent me over to the medical center. The team there ran in a catheter, took a look and used a laser beam to blast out the fibrous scar tissue. Home free.

Three months later I staggered off a tennis court after only ten minutes of dignified doubles. This time my guy sent me directly to the medical center. They slid in a catheter, took a look and decided the problem was now beyond them. Two hours later I was in the operating room for my second bypass operation in three years. This is a miracle that is 30 years old and is definitely not news. But think about it. I was unconscious at the time, but here's the kind of thing that goes on. This sentence is from *Bypass*, a book written for laypeople by Jonathan L. Halperin, a cardiologist, and Richard Levine, a journalist: "He inserts the blade [of a small surgical jigsaw] at the neck and, with both hands, yanks it down Mr.—'s chest, splitting the bone like seasoned pine." A rib spreader, a device that looks as if it belongs in an auto mechanic's kit, pulls the ribs apart so the surgeon has a space six inches wide and nine inches long in which to work.

The real art is attaching the tubes that will carry venous blood to the heart-lung machine and bring back oxygenated blood—and then deliberately stopping the heart. The machine is started, and the heart is stopped. Time is of the essence as lengths of vein or artery taken from other parts of the body are now attached to blocked arteries at points downstream from the blockages. This means sewing vessels, some smaller than cocktail straws, together so well that they are bloodtight—and doing it when everything is wet and slippery. The surgeon clamps the aorta, stopping the flow of blood, before he attaches the other ends of the grafts to it. Finally, as part of a routine this team performs several times a day, they start up the heart again and wean it off the machine. Good as new. Tennis, anyone?

Our times are a golden age for physics, which is close to determining the ultimate constituents of matter and the theory of everything. The same is true for astronomy, which is now seeing the Universe for what it is, bubbles of universes made mostly of dark matter. Molecular biology is slowly acquiring the ability to cure genetic diseases and give crops whatever characteristics we want. And while medicine is still locked in trench warfare with any number of grim diseases, it is also true that for the millions of people with heart problems, this is an age of miracles.

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P790

Around the Mall and Beyond

By Michael Kernan

The Smithsonian, the world's largest museum and research complex, has yet another address—http://www.si.edu—on the World Wide Web; so put your feet up and come visit the new 'Museum Without Walls'

The home page serves as the gateway to thousands of pages of information and photographs, as well as sound and video clips, all available at the click of a mouse.

Today we pay a visit to the virtual Smithsonian, and I see I am going to need some help.

Now, I am not computer illiterate. I have been working with word processors for years. So I was not at all intimidated to discover the new "Smithsonian Without Walls" on the World Wide Web, a part of the Internet. When my dear old Kaypro died at age seven I bought an IBM clone—and discovered that three computer generations had passed in that time. I had to learn the new system from scratch. And I feel pretty good about it except when I hit the wrong key and set an entire 100-page document in boldface.

But now I have apparently stumbled into yet another new world.

I am sitting here with Mignon Erixon-Stanford, Internet coordinator (her e-mail address is irmss907@sivm.si.edu, which looks to me like the cat jumped on the keyboard), and she is telling me about the World Wide Web. "All links within the same Web server," explains Mignon, "should be relative, not absolute, because the final product is populated across multiple servers."

Well, as an English major, I should find this easy to decipher since the words are perfectly ordinary, commonly used words. But it is baffling: How do you "populate across"? Fortunately, with Mignon's guidance, I soon learn that I don't have to decipher any of that arcane language to explore the electronic Smithsonian. In fact, it's simple.

Here, in a Smithsonian office on the Mall, I *can* log onto the World Wide Web. The Web is an electronic publishing forum connected by a system of diverging pathways that my computer knows how to follow so that I don't have to know. And once there, I simply type in another cat-on-the-keys address—http://www.si.edu—and on the screen appears the Smithsonian Institution's home page, with a picture of the Castle under fair skies and a menu that allows me to start exploring the Institution's museums and resources (left).

You can reach the Smithsonian's home page through any of the commercial Internet providers or through America Online. Incidentally, since June 1993 the Smithsonian has welcomed tens of thousands of electronic visitors to its home page on America Online.

The main difference between our presence on AOL and on the Web lies in how the two are set up. The Web is far more comprehensive—you'll find a lot more to read there; but on America Online we can do some pretty amazing things too; like set up a curator in a "chatroom" or a larger auditorium for some lively electronic discussion. On October 2, from 9 to 10 P.M. (EST), Dwight Bowers from the National Museum of American History will be on-line discussing the American musical theater.

When the Smithsonian launched its home page on the World Wide Web last May, its "Web site" contained more than 1,500 pages and 3,000 photographs. Today, the images and information on it continue to multiply as the Institution's 20 so-called Webmasters add new material to it on a daily basis. In just three months of operation, the site has served up more than five million screens of information. The capacity of the Smithsonian's Web site is almost limitless, and with the Web's vast network of cross-references linking one site to another, the implications for research and scholarship are beyond belief. I wonder what James Smithson would think of this new means

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we have for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge."

It is hard enough for an old guy like me to grasp the scope of it all. For instance, we were noodling around with the Smithsonian's virtual *Enola Gay* exhibit, which contains photographs of the physical show at the National Air and Space Museum and quantities of words about B-29 bombers, the controversy over the exhibit, Secretary Heyman's comments (if you have the right equipment you can get a video of him speaking) and other subjects that you can click on. ("Click" is now a transitive verb: you "click" on something when you use your mouse to make a selection by pushing its clicker.)

I clicked on "Hiroshima," and after a two-minute delay got a flood of information. The reason it took awhile is that, as Mignon casually remarked, "We just went to Japan."

My simple click had told my computer to search the files of a computer in Hiroshima, Japan, the site of the A-Bomb WWW Museum, a virtual museum that exists only on the World Wide Web, only on screens and in minds.

There is so much to see in the virtual Smithsonian, the Smithsonian Without Walls, that I don't know where to start. Perhaps at the Encyclopedia Smithsonian, in which I can find a complete history (and photograph) of Cher Ami, the heroic World War I carrier pigeon, or the Foucault Pendulum or the Hope Diamond, information based on questions frequently asked in the museums.

Now I've clicked on the gem and mineral collection of the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH), and I've just had a look at a remarkably clear image of Marie Antoinette's earrings and a wonderful double-exposure of the ceremonial Smithsonian Mace. Here's SMITHSONIAN magazine's home page, where our 25th-anniversary logo offers me a choice of stories on science, history, the arts and, good grief, the *Around the Mall* column.

With further clicking I've found the Division of Fishes' award-winning home page, where I can get a quick read on what kind of research each of our ichthyologists is pursuing. Here I've found a list of discussion groups I can subscribe to. I can even eavesdrop—but I won't—on the discussions of mammalian biology or crustacean systematics, distribution and ecology.

Now my computer is showing me how the conversion of the Smithsonian's Multiple Mirror Telescope, located near Tucson, Arizona, is proceeding this summer. There's a video camera at the summit of Mount Hopkins trained on the MMT building, and a new image is grabbed every 30 seconds. I can see that the chamber doors have been removed to make room for the installation of the new 6.5-meter mirror.

But I have my own project: I want to look at the Ocean Planet exhibit at NMNH, first the virtual version and then for real.

I click on the words "Ocean Planet On-line" on the general menu of offerings from NMNH and I get a layout of the rooms of the exhibit, a traveling show that opened in April. Clicking on the room labeled "Immersion" brings up a pretty logo and a short burst of words. "In ways we may never have even imagined," the screen tells me, "we're all seafarers. After thousands of years of seafaring, we're only beginning to fathom the workings of our watery planet."

I can click on a montage of seagulls, buoys, boats and fish to hear the sounds of waves, the call of the birds, the buoy bells and so on. But that's merely a frill. Clicking my way along from room to room, I visit the sections on ocean science, sea people, the sea store, oceans in peril, heroes and others.

Invited to go deeper by choosing from a list of subsections, I pick "El Niño" and get another map and still more information and yet another list of even more in-depth subjects including "El Niño and the Southern Oscillation: A Reversal of Fortune," which happens to be a master's thesis by Kimberly Amaral.

El Niño, I read, is a mysterious wind shift in the Pacific that occurs every two to seven years around November or December (hence the name "El Niño," "the Christ Child"), when the westerly trade winds subside and allow the warm water they have been pushing to the west to flow back into the eastern Pacific. Everywhere, things go crazy. Fish, robbed of nutrient-rich cool water, die. There are droughts in Australia, Southern Africa and India; cyclones in Tahiti; mud slides in Colorado; floods in Peru.

Another section concerns the risks at sea, featuring a lot of statistics and stuff about memorials and rituals of the seafaring folk. There are pictures of the many artifacts connected with risk, from memorial wreaths to be cast on the water to weather charms and survival suits.

By now I have pretty well mastered the virtual Ocean Planet, I think. Time to head over to the real museum.

People in shorts, people in T-shirts, mothers and babies, groups of schoolchildren, tour leaders with furled umbrellas—pretty much the standard summer crowd at a Washington museum. Once inside, information pours over me.

Here is a glass tower filled with Nike sneakers. Is this relevant? Oh yes: 60,000 of them fell off a ship in the northeast Pacific in 1990. Some washed up a year later in Oregon; by '93 some had reached Hawaii; more are expected on the Atlantic coast by '96, brought by the ponderous movements of a gyre, a tremendous circular ocean current.

Here is the El Niño exhibit. It tells me the same things I learned on my machine, but now I watch video clips of the drought in Australia and the rains in Texas, and neat shots of hurricanes and other natural phenomena.

On through the exhibit: a ship's figurehead, fishermen's T-shirts, traps, a Polynesian stick chart for mapping the Pacific wave and current patterns, samples of polluted water, and sea products from denture adhesive to explosives, from nail polish to paint. More kiosks and photomurals, scary facts about the ozone hole, industrial pollution and zebra mussels, which are infiltrating our waters at an alarming rate and will cost us $5 billion in damage by the year 2000 (SMITHSONIAN, February 1994).

It is an interesting show, all right, and an important one for everybody, for it tells us that we have got to start thinking about the oceans and what is happening to them. In the museum itself, the information is obviously more exciting, more firsthand than on the Web. But I must say, much to my surprise, I was won over by the exhibit on my little screen in the tranquillity of an office. With my feet up on the desk.

A Selection of Smithsonian WWW Addresses

Encyclopedia Smithsonian: http://www.si.edu/welcome/faq/start.htm
Enola Gay Exhibit: http://www.nasm.edu/GALLERIES/GAL103/gal103.html
Gems & Minerals Collection: http://galaxy.einet.net/images/gems/gems-icons.html
Division of Fishes: http://nmnhwww.si.edu/vert/fish.html
Smithsonian Magazine: http://www.si.edu/resource/simag/start.htm
Smithsonian Discussion Groups: http://www.si.edu/resource/bbs.htm
Multiple Mirror Telescope Observatory: http://oir-www.harvard.edu/MMT/mmto.html
Ocean Planet On-line: http://seawifs.gsfc.nasa.gov/ocean_planet.html

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"I believe these kids

Now I've got to

You'd think getting a bunch of teenagers to study engineering in their free time would be impossible. But Al Ware, of General Motors' Vehicle Launch Center, helped get 5,000 students enrolled in the Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program this year. They take advanced science and math courses. They do engineering projects like building

will make great engineers.
make them believe it."

General Motors.

a full-scale moveable car entirely from paper. And they learn they can solve just about any problem they set their minds to solve. Al says, "The more we put into this community, the more we'll get out of it." He's right. Because some former teenagers he inspired are designing better automobiles at GM today.

Smithsonian Highlights

Nocturne: Battersea Bridge (c. 1872), a pastel by James McNeill Whistler, is in the "Whistler & Japan" show, at the Freer Gallery of Art through January 1, 1996.

Planning a Smithsonian Visit?

Receive a special free Associates' Planning Packet. Write Smithsonian Information, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, or call (202) 357-2700, daily, 9 A.M.- 4 P.M.; for callers with communication impairments, TTY: (202) 357-1729. *Note:* Parking near Smithsonian museums is limited. The Metrorail subway has parking available at some stations (details in packet).

Begin your visit at the Smithsonian Information Center's Associates' Reception Desk—open 9 A.M.- 4 P.M. daily—in the Castle. The National Museum of Natural History's Court dining room offers buffet service daily, 11 A.M.- 3 P.M.

Regular Hours Resume

Smithsonian museums are now operating on regular hours, 10 A.M. - 5:30 P.M. daily, except December 25. Hours for the Anacostia Museum are 10 A.M. - 5 P.M. daily. Hours at the National Zoo are 9 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. daily for buildings, and 8 A.M. - 6 P.M. for grounds.

Smithsonian Web Site

The Smithsonian home page on the World Wide Web (http://www.si.edu) offers on-line information about exhibitions, collections, products and events. See *Around the Mall*, page 32.

Special October Exhibits, Events

National Museum of American Art

Secrets of the Dark Chamber: The Art of the American Daguerreotype (through October 29) More than 152 images document early photography's contribution to American art and culture. See *Highlights Continued*, page 44.

Recent Acquisitions on Paper (through October 29) Works acquired by the museum betweeen 1991 and 1994 by such artists as Georgia O'Keeffe, John Baldessari, Grant Wood and Eric Fischl.

Renwick Gallery

Nancy Crow: Improvisational Quilts (through January 1, 1996) Exhibition traces artist's experimentations with traditional quilting patterns.

National Museum of American History

World War II: Sharing Memories (through November 12) Exhibition designed to elicit visitor participation in commemorating the war features paintings, objects, photographs, memorabilia.

Science in American Life Permanent installation tracking advances and discoveries in science over the past 125 years—from aspirin to the atom—includes a hands-on science center.

American Encounters Permanent exhibit looks at the American Indian, Hispanic and Anglo-American cultures of New Mexico's Upper Rio Grande Valley.

National Postal Museum

Located next to Union Station on Capitol Hill, the museum presents exhibitions that trace the history of the nation's mail service.

Philatelic Rarities (through October 20) Display of philatelic rarities features original stamp sketches by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

National Air and Space Museum

Flights of Fancy: Photographs by Jacques-Henri Lartigue, 1904-1922 (through March 3, 1996) Images capture the early years of aviation.

The Enola Gay (runs indefinitely) Exhibition features the forward fuselage of the *Enola Gay*, the B-29 that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. For information on free, same-day, timed passes, call (202) 786-2122.

National Museum of Natural History

Ocean Planet (through January 1, 1996) Major exhibition looks at the causes and consequences of environmental threats to the world's oceans.

Gem and Mineral Hall Gallery is closed for renovation until December 1996. The famous Hope Diamond is on view on the second floor of the Rotunda along with two of the world's finest emeralds—"The Mogul" and a recently discovered 665.4-carat, gem-quality crystal.

National Zoological Park

Think Tank (opens October 27) New permanent exhibit explores the biology and evolution of animal thinking, focusing on orangutans, monkeys, crabs and leaf-cutter ants.

Freer Gallery of Art

Whistler & Japan (through January 1, 1996) Exhibition of paintings, drawings and prints executed by James McNeill Whistler in the 1860s and '70s and known as his "Japanese pictures."

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Goyō: Japanese Prints (through March 17, 1996) Color woodblock prints by Hashiguchi Goyō (1880-1921).
Painted Prayers (through April 7, 1996) Photographs by Stephen P. Huyler document ritual images painted by Indian women on the walls of their homes.

National Museum of African Art
Art from the Forge (through January 2, 1996) Metal jewelry, ceremonial armor and furnishings made and used by the Tuareg and Moor peoples, who inhabit regions of West and North Africa.
The Ancient Nubian City of Kerma, 2500-1500 B.C. (runs indefinitely) Loan exhibition from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, features ceramics, jewelry, ivory animals and other objects.

Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden
Stephan Balkenhol (October 19-January 15, 1996) Painted wood heads, figures and animals by the contemporary German sculptor.
Directions: Martin Kippenberger (through October 22) Collages and satirical drawings by the German mixed-media artist.

Arts and Industries Building
Equal Rights and Justice (through March 3, 1996) Organized by the High Museum of Art in Atlanta and presented by the Smithsonian Center for African American History and Culture, the exhibition features contemporary art inspired by events in the civil rights movement.

National Portrait Gallery
Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture (October 6-January 28) Major retrospective showcases the work of one of America's most highly sought-after turn-of-the-century portrait painters.

Anacostia Museum
Southern City, National Ambition: The Growth of Early Washington, D.C., 1800-1860 (October 14-March 3, 1996) A joint presentation with the Octagon Museum, the exhibit includes artifacts, drawings and manuscripts from the early history of the District of Columbia.

S. Dillon Ripley Center, International Gallery
Voyages and Visions: Nineteenth-Century European Images of the Middle East from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (October 2-January 1, 1996) Watercolors and drawings reflect 19th-century Europe's expanded interest in the Middle East.

Continued on page 43

When did you get your first bottle of Jack Daniel's? Write us and tell us about it.

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plus a progestin, there's important information you should know about.
Introducing Prempro.™

Many women who experience menopause take two hormones: Premarin and a progestin. Now, for the first time, these two hormones are available in one convenient package, requiring just one prescription from your doctor or health care provider. It's called Prempro.

IT JUST MAKES SENSE.

Because millions of women who have not had a hysterectomy take both medications for relief of their menopausal symptoms, why not have both tablets together, in a single package marked with the days of the week? That's the thinking behind new Prempro. A simpler, more convenient way to take the medications millions of women already take. A concept more in keeping with today's intensely busy lifestyles. A concept which may, depending on your pharmacy, even save you money because with Prempro you fill only one prescription instead of two. And, for women on a prescription plan, there's only one copayment instead of two.

While women taking Prempro can experience menstrual-like bleeding, research has shown that many women who stay on Prempro stop bleeding within 1 year of use. Your doctor or health care provider can tell you more about the bleeding patterns you might expect with this type of medication.

When taking Prempro for menopause or osteoporosis, you may experience increases in high-density lipoproteins (HDLs), commonly known as "good" cholesterol. However, this effect is less than Premarin alone. Prempro also decreases low-density lipoproteins (LDLs), known as "bad" cholesterol, comparably to Premarin.

THE ESTROGEN IN PREMPRO IS PREMARIN.

Premarin, a complex blend of estrogens, is the estrogen that's been prescribed for more than 50 years. Today, more than 8,000,000 American women take Premarin. Wyeth-Ayerst goes to great lengths to ensure the quality of Premarin. Of the 30 billion tablets sold, not one has been recalled. Ever.

The same standards of quality also apply to the production of Cycrin® (medroxyprogesterone acetate tablets, USP), the progestin in Prempro.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MENOPAUSE AND OSTEOPOROSIS.

While most women who take hormone replacement therapy take it for relief of menopausal symptoms such as night sweats, hot flashes, and vaginal dryness, more and more are continuing to take it beyond menopause to help prevent the brittle bone disease known as osteoporosis...a disease that affects one out of every four women over 50.

Premarin, the estrogen in Prempro, was *the first estrogen proven to help prevent osteoporosis*...a disease that usually begins after menopause, when a woman's body produces very little estrogen. Without estrogen, bones can become fragile, more likely to break. In fact, half the bone mass a woman will lose in her lifetime, she'll lose in the first 3 to 6 years after menopause begins. Ask your doctor or health care provider if you are at risk for osteoporosis and whether new Prempro, along with a treatment program including calcium, diet, and exercise, is right for you.

SIDE EFFECTS OF HORMONES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

If you have not had a hysterectomy, estrogen alone can increase the risk of cancer of the uterus. The addition of progestin, however, may reduce this risk. That is why many doctors and health care providers now prescribe progestin in conjunction with estrogen for their patients. Progestins may have unfavorable effects on blood sugars which might make a diabetic condition worse. The most common side effects are breast tenderness, headache, and abdominal pain.

When you discuss hormone replacement therapy with your doctor or health care provider, it's important to inform him or her about all issues relating to your personal and family health history of breast cancer, breast lumps, abnormal vaginal bleeding, abnormal blood clotting, severe headache, dizziness, or liver disease. Women who are pregnant should not take hormone replacement therapy.

CAN PREMPRO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LIFE?

If you value convenience, new Prempro *can* make a difference for you. It can make a difference because it provides you with the two medications you have been prescribed in one daily reminder pack.

Prempro is the first and only combination of estrogen tablets *and* progestin tablets available in a single package, requiring a single prescription.

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PLEASE BE SURE TO READ THE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.

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PREMPRO™ Brand of conjugated estrogens tablets, USP and medroxyprogesterone acetate tablets, USP
This summary describes when and how to use estrogen/progestin drugs and the benefits and risks of treatment.

ESTROGENS INCREASE THE RISK OF CANCER OF THE UTERUS IN WOMEN WHO HAVE HAD THEIR MENOPAUSE ("CHANGE OF LIFE"). ***THIS FINDING REFERS TO ESTROGENS GIVEN WITHOUT PROGESTIN.***
Progestin drugs taken with estrogen-containing drugs significantly reduce but do not eliminate this risk. If you use any estrogen-containing drug, it is important to visit your doctor regularly and report any unusual vaginal bleeding right away. Vaginal bleeding after menopause may be a warning sign of uterine cancer. Your doctor should evaluate any unusual vaginal bleeding to find out the cause.

ESTROGENS/PROGESTINS SHOULD NOT BE USED DURING PREGNANCY.
Estrogens do not prevent miscarriage (spontaneous abortion) and are not needed in the days following childbirth. If you take estrogens during pregnancy your unborn child has a greater than usual chance of having birth defects. These birth defects may affect the baby's urinary system and sex organs.

ESTROGEN/PROGESTIN DRUGS

PREMPRO is a combination of two hormone tablets, an estrogen and a progestin. This hormone combination has been shown to provide the benefits of estrogen replacement therapy while lowering the frequency of a possible precancerous condition of the uterine lining. This therapy is not intended for women who have had a hysterectomy (surgical removal of the uterus).

Estrogens have several important uses but also some risks. You must decide, with your doctor, whether the risks of estrogens are acceptable when weighed against their benefits. Check with your doctor to make sure you are using the lowest possible effective dose.

With PREMPRO therapy several menstrual-like bleeding patterns may occur. These may range from absence of bleeding to irregular bleeding. If bleeding occurs, it is frequently light spotting or moderate menstrual-like bleeding, but it may be heavy. Please discuss your bleeding pattern and appropriate follow-up with your physician.

USES OF ESTROGEN

To reduce menopausal symptoms. Estrogens are hormones produced by the ovaries of normal women. The decrease in the amount of estrogen that occurs in all women, usually between the ages of 45 and 55, causes the menopause. Sometimes the ovaries are removed during an operation causing "surgical menopause." When the amount of estrogen begins to decrease, some women develop very uncomfortable symptoms, such as feelings of warmth in the face, neck, and chest, or sudden intense episodes of heat and sweating ("hot flashes" or "hot flushes"). Using estrogen drugs can help the body adjust to lower estrogen levels and reduce these symptoms. Some women have none or only mild menopausal symptoms; in others, symptoms can be severe. These symptoms may last only a few months or longer. Taking PREMPRO can alleviate these symptoms. If you are not taking hormones for other reasons, such as the prevention of osteoporosis, you should take PREMPRO only as long as you need it for relief from your menopausal symptoms.

To prevent brittle bones. After age 40, and especially after menopause, some women develop osteoporosis. This is a thinning of the bones that makes them weaker and more likely to break, often leading to fractures of spine, hip, and wrist bones. Taking estrogens after the menopause slows down bone loss and may prevent bones from breaking. Eating foods that are high in calcium (such as dairy products) or taking calcium supplements (1000 to 1500 milligrams per day) and certain types of exercise may also help prevent osteoporosis. Since estrogen use is associated with some risks, its use in the prevention of osteoporosis should be limited to women who appear susceptible to this condition. The following characteristics are often present in women who are likely to develop osteoporosis: white race, thinness, cigarette smoking, family history and early menopause.

To treat vulvar and vaginal atrophy (itching, burning, dryness in or around the vagina, difficulty or burning on urination) associated with menopause.

WHEN ESTROGENS SHOULD NOT BE USED

During pregnancy (see Boxed Warning). If you think you may be pregnant, do not use any form of estrogen-containing drug. Using estrogens while you are pregnant may cause your unborn child to have birth defects. Estrogens do not prevent miscarriage.

If you have unusual vaginal bleeding which has not been evaluated by your doctor (see Boxed Warning). Unusual vaginal bleeding can be a warning sign of cancer of the uterus, especially if it happens after menopause. Your doctor must find out the cause of the bleeding so that he or she can recommend the proper treatment. Taking estrogens without visiting your doctor can cause you serious harm if your vaginal bleeding is caused by cancer of the uterus.

If you have had cancer. Since estrogens increase the risk of certain types of cancer, you should not use estrogens if you have ever had cancer of the breast or uterus.

If you have any circulation problems. Estrogen drugs should not be used except in unusually special situations in which your doctor decides that you need estrogen therapy so much that the risks are acceptable. Women with abnormal blood clotting conditions should avoid estrogen use (see **RISKS OF ESTROGENS AND/OR PROGESTINS**).

When they do not work. During menopause, some women develop nervous symptoms or depression. Estrogens do not relieve these symptoms. You may have heard that taking estrogens for years after menopause will keep your skin soft and supple and keep you feeling young. There is no evidence for these claims and such long-term estrogen use may have serious risks.

After childbirth or when breastfeeding a baby. Estrogen should not be used to try to stop the breast from filling with milk after a baby is born. Such treatment may increase the risk of developing blood clots (see **RISKS OF ESTROGENS AND/OR PROGESTINS**).

If you are breastfeeding, you should avoid using any drugs because many drugs pass through to the baby in the milk. While nursing a baby, you should take drugs only on the advice of your health care provider.

RISKS OF ESTROGENS AND/OR PROGESTINS

Cancer of the uterus. The risk of cancer of the uterus increases when estrogens are used alone, the longer they are used and when larger doses are taken. There is a higher risk of cancer of the uterus if you are overweight, diabetic, or have high blood pressure.

The hormone combination you will be taking contains estrogen and progestin. This combination has been shown to provide the benefits of estrogen replacement therapy while reducing the risk of a precancerous condition of the uterine lining.

Additional risks may be associated with the inclusion of a progestin in estrogen treatment. The possible risks include unfavorable effects on blood fats and sugars. Usually, the smaller the dose and the shorter the duration of treatment, the more these effects are minimized. Check with your doctor to make sure you are using the lowest effective dose and only for as long as you need it

Cancer of the breast. Most studies have not shown a higher risk of breast cancer in women who have ever used estrogens. However, some studies have reported that breast cancer developed more often (up to twice the usual rate) in women who used estrogens for long periods of time (especially more than 10 years), or who used high doses for shorter time periods. The effects of added progestin on the risk of breast cancer are unknown. Some studies have reported a somewhat increased risk, even higher than the possible risk associated with estrogens alone. Others have not. Regular breast examinations by a health professional and monthly self-examination are recommended for all women.

Gallbladder disease. Women who use estrogens after menopause are more likely to develop gallbladder disease needing surgery than women who do not use estrogens.

Abnormal blood clotting. Taking estrogens may increase the risk of blood clots. These clots can cause a stroke, a heart attack or a pulmonary embolus, any of which may cause death or serious long-term disability.

Excess calcium in the blood. Taking estrogens may lead to severe hypercalcemia in women with breast and/or bone cancer.

During pregnancy. There is an increased risk of birth defects in children whose mothers take this drug during the first four months of pregnancy. Several reports suggest an association between mothers who take these drugs in the first trimester of pregnancy and genital abnormalities in male and female babies. The risk to the male baby is the possibility of being born with a condition in which the opening of the penis is on the underside rather than the tip of the penis (hypospadias). Hypospadias occurs in about 5 to 8 per 1,000 male births and is about doubled with exposure to these drugs. There is not enough information to quantify the risk to exposed female fetuses. However, enlargement of the clitoris and fusion of the labia may occur, although rarely.

Therefore, since drugs of this type may induce mild masculinization of the external genitalia of the female fetus, as well as hypospadias in the male fetus, it is wise to avoid using the drug during the first trimester of pregnancy. These drugs have been used as a test for pregnancy, but such use is no longer considered safe because of possible damage to a developing baby. Also, more rapid methods for testing for pregnancy are now available. If you take PREMPRO and later find you were pregnant when you took it, be sure to discuss this with your doctor as soon as possible.

SIDE EFFECTS WITH ESTROGENS AND/OR PROGESTINS

In addition to the risks listed above, the following side effects have been reported with estrogen and/or progestin use:

- Nausea, vomiting; pain, cramps, swelling, or tenderness in the abdomen.
- Yellowing of the skin and/or whites of the eyes.
- Breast tenderness or enlargement.
- Enlargement of benign tumors of the uterus.
- Irregular bleeding or spotting.
- Change in amount of cervical secretion.
- Vaginal yeast infections.
- Retention of excess fluid. This may make some conditions worsen, such as asthma, epilepsy, migraine, heart disease, or kidney disease.
- A spotty darkening of the skin, particularly on the face; reddening of the skin; skin rashes.
- Worsening of porphyria.
- Headache, migraines, dizziness, faintness, or changes in vision (including intolerance to contact lenses).
- Mental depression.
- Involuntary muscle spasms
- Hair loss or abnormal hairiness.
- Increase or decrease in weight.
- Changes in sex drive.
- Possible changes in blood sugar.

REDUCING THE RISKS OF ESTROGEN/PROGESTIN USE

If you decide to take an estrogen/progestin combination, you can reduce your risks by carefully monitoring your treatment.

See your doctor regularly. While you are taking PREMPRO, it is important to visit your doctor at least once a year for a checkup. If you develop vaginal bleeding while taking estrogens, you may need further evaluation. If members of your family have had breast cancer or if you have ever had breast lumps or an abnormal mammogram (breast x-ray), you may need to have more frequent breast examinations.

Reassess your need for treatment. You and your doctor should reevaluate your need for estrogens at least every six months.

Be alert for signs of trouble. Report these or any other unusual symptoms to your doctor immediately:

- Abnormal bleeding from the vagina.
- Pains in the calves or chest, a sudden shortness of breath or coughing blood.
- Severe headache or vomiting, dizziness, faintness, or changes in vision or speech, weakness or numbness of arm or leg.
- Breast lumps.
- Yellowing of the skin and/or whites of the eyes.
- Pain, swelling, or tenderness in the abdomen.

OTHER INFORMATION

Estrogens increase the risk of developing a condition (endometrial hyperplasia) that may lead to cancer of the lining of the uterus. Taking progestins, another hormonal drug, with estrogens lowers the risk of developing this condition.

You should know, however, that taking estrogens *with* progestins may have unhealthy effects on blood sugar, which might make a diabetic condition worse.

Some research has shown that estrogens taken *without* progestins may protect women against developing heart disease. However, this is not certain. The protection shown may have been caused by the characteristics of the estrogen-treated women and not by the estrogen treatment itself. In general, treated women were slimmer, more physically active, and were less likely to have diabetes than the untreated women. These characteristics are known to protect against heart disease.

It is important to discuss, in detail, with your doctor or health care provider all the possible risks and benefits of long-term estrogen and progestin treatment as they affect you personally.

This Summary provides the most important information about PREMPRO. If you want to read more, ask your doctor or pharmacist to let you read the professional labeling.

This Brief Summary for Direct-to-Consumer Advertising is based on the current PREMPRO Tablets insert (PI 4285-2) issued February 10, 1995 with the incorporation, in lay language, of pertinent text from the Physician Insert, (CI 4283-2) issued February 10, 1995.

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Heye Center, National Museum of the American Indian (New York)
Creation's Journey: Masterworks of Native American Identity and Belief (runs indefinitely) First of three inaugural exhibitions features 165 objects that represent tribal groups from North, Central and South America.

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum (New York)
Gallery Closing The exhibition galleries of the museum are closed to the public for renovation for about one year.

The Smithsonian Associates, U.S. and International Events

The Smithsonian Associates will visit the Cranbrook Educational Community in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, October 19-22. The series of events will include lectures on underwater archaeology and endangered-species conservation.

Associates in the Bloomfield Hills area will receive brochure invitations. Contributing Members will receive complimentary tickets to a selected lecture. For information, contact: U.S. and International Events, 1100 Jefferson Drive, S.W., MRC 702, Washington, D.C. 20560; or call: (202) 357-4800, ext. 274.

The Smithsonian Associates, Resident Program

To become a member, or for fee and ticket information, call (202) 357-3030. October events include:
Chautauqua at the Smithsonian (October 16; 6 P.M.) Frequent Chautauqua lecturer Roger Rosenblatt speaks on "The 21st Century: How Do We Want to Live?"
A Life on the Road: An Evening with Charles Kuralt (October 19; 6 P.M.) Discussion and book-signing features the former CBS *News* broadcast journalist.

Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

SITES organizes and circulates exhibitions to cities throughout the United States and abroad. To sponsor a show in your community, write SITES, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C. 20560. Here are some October exhibits:
• Cleveland, Ohio (October 7-November 12, 1995) *Beyond Category: The Musical Genius of Duke Ellington,* Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art.
• Memphis, Tennessee (October 7-December 3) *Mexico: A Landscape Revisited,* Memphis Brooks Museum of Art.

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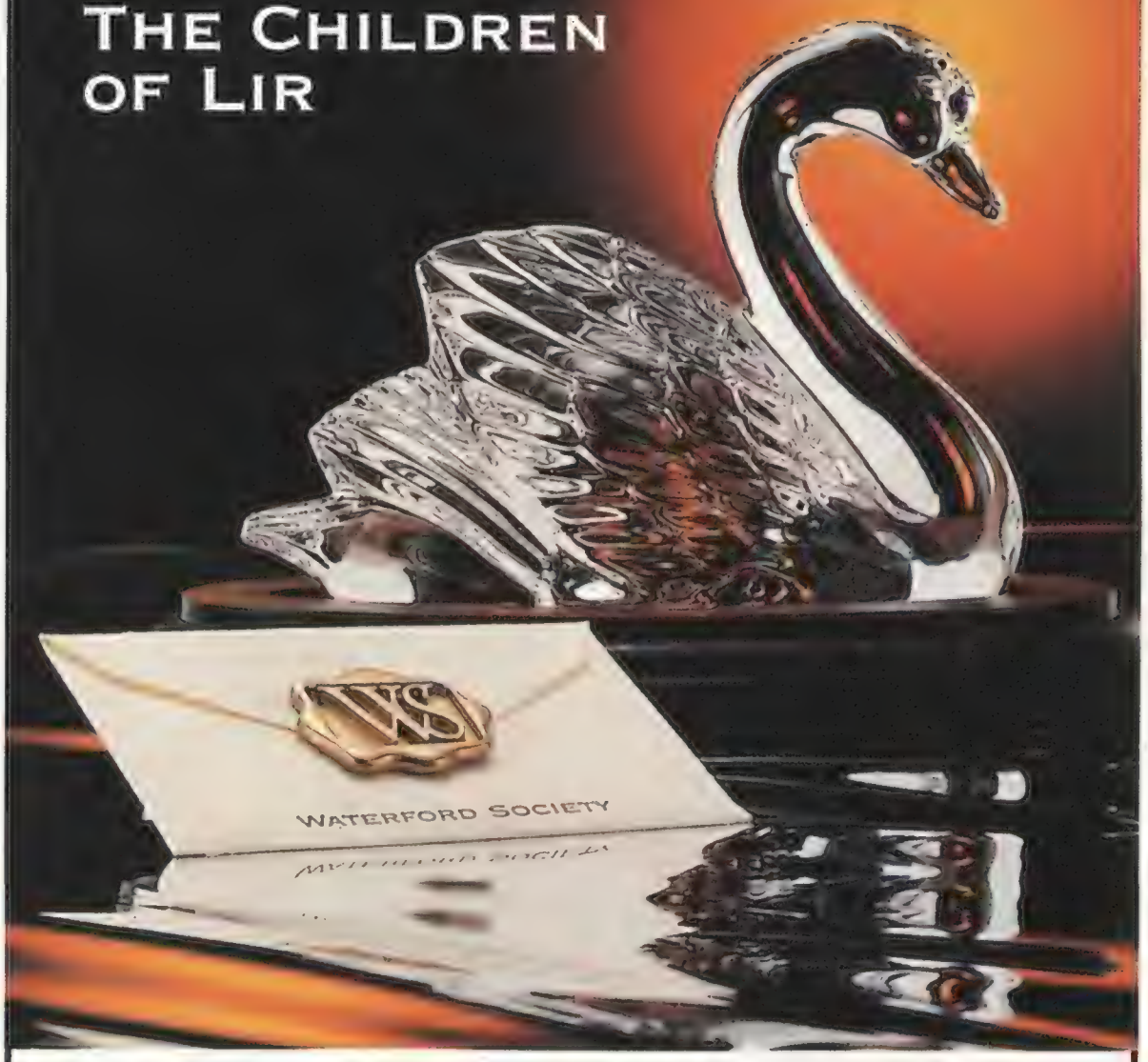

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A revolution in art: the American daguerreotype

The invention of photography was one of the most significant events of the 19th century, irrevocably changing our perception of reality. "Here is a discovery launched upon the world, that must make a revolution in art," declared the *New Yorker* shortly before Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre's groundbreaking process was announced in Paris on August 19, 1839. This new technique of producing exact likenesses on a sheet of silver-plated copper soon became a sensation in the United States. Studios opened in every major city; itinerant artists traveled the countryside. Noted for their silvery, mirrorlike sheen, daguerreotypes framed the faces of the nation's great men and women, caught the spirit of Westward expansion and chronicled much of mid-19th-century American life.

One of the largest shows ever assembled of these one-of-a-kind first photographs is now at the National Museum of American Art. "Secrets of the Dark Chamber: The Art of the American Daguerreotype," on view though October 29, opens a window on the America of the 1840s and '50s and elucidates the impact of this revolutionary process on American life and art.

Diane M. Bolz

An unidentified artist posed a fellow daguerreotypist with the camera they used to ply their trade (c. 1850).

Arresting image of dancer Lola Montez (1851) was made by Albert Sands Southworth and Josiah Johnson Hawes.

The Moon, 6 August 1851 was photographed through a telescope by Boston innovator John Adams Whipple.

Continued on page 46

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Watermelon Eaters (c. 1855) is by an unidentified artist.

Undated image titled *Men in Trees* is of unknown origin.

Marcus Aurelius Root caught son Albert asleep in 1850.

Niagara Falls (c. 1854) was recorded by Platt D. Babbitt.

Artist and date of *Woman Writing Letters* are not known.

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At Chrysler Corporation, we're doing our part by recycling. Every year we recycle thousands of tons of wooden pallets, cardboard, and paper. Even our cars are 75 percent recyclable.

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Las Vegas meets la-la land

By Richard Wolkomir

Inside its surreal new superhotels, the city synonymous with glitz is taking fantasy to the max and creating an escapist mecca

Never mind that the Luxor replicates the Great Pyramid of Giza. Or that it rises 30 stories above the Mojave Desert. Or that it is preternaturally black, like Darth Vader's helmet. That is not enough. Its base is broad enough for six simultaneous football games and 13 tennis matches. Its walls comprise 11 acres of tinted glass. Within its atrium, touted as the world's largest, you could stack nine Boeing 747s. Not enough.

Not in today's Las Vegas. Not when new megahotels like the Luxor are transforming the Strip into a laboratory of Vulcanian urban design. Of the world's ten most colossal resort hotels, Las Vegas now has nine. Yet mere hugeness is no longer enough. The world's 11th-largest hotel, the Luxor, is the most outrageous—the Great Pyramid of Nevada. But even weirdness is not enough.

Not with market share at stake. And so the new superhotels deploy high-tech movies, lasers, robots, motion simulators and fantasy architecture to lure you into synthetic realities. You can wander through a Caribbean never-never land or visit Camelot or Oz, watch an ersatz volcano spew bogus lava or warp back to ancient Egypt, the Spielbergized version.

Come, explore the Luxor. Pass the registration area, which emulates a Nile barge with a full-size lateen sail. Enter the Pyramid Cafe, where the Luxor's director of attractions, Cliff Hay, formerly of Orlando's Universal Studios, is explaining over coffee just what—besides the quarters plinking into slot machines —is going on here. "This hotel is a special effect!" says Hay. It is not just the black pyramid's outlandishness he has in mind. "I have an Egyptologist on my staff," he says proudly.

One job for the Egyptologist before the hotel opened in late 1993 was making sure none of the hieroglyphics encrusting the sandstone-tan interior said anything offensive. Imagine a baccarat player conversant in pharaonic Egyptian. He spots an inadvertently naughty obelisk inscription . . . So, the folks at Luxor addressed the problem on two fronts: the Egyptologist had to double-check each authentic hieroglyph affixed to the walls. "And," says Hay, "we created crypto-Egyptian. We fed the signs into a computer and told it to generate random sequences—of the 500 we developed, about 40 actually said something, and we had to take them out."

But for the hotel's replica of King Tut's tomb the watchword was "realism," Lucasfilm-style. "All the pieces were built in Egypt, and we had an Egyptologist from Cairo make sure we did things right," Hay boasts. "For instance, we needed to bind stuff together with leather, and he said, 'No! This is cow leather,' so we wound up getting deer leather because we couldn't find

All that glitters is not Giza: the Luxor hotel's Great Pyramid and Sphinx warp you back to pseudo-Egypt.

In the Luxor atrium, said to be the world's largest, the Attractions Level features synthesized adventure in the ziggurat-style pyramid (left), an eatery (under the gigantic dome) and a retail-shops complex (rear).

antelope leather in the large quantities we needed."

Actually, the Luxor is not an exact replica of the Great Pyramid at Giza—Boeing 747s landing just up the street at McCarran International Airport might have bumped the apex, so the FAA said to scale it down.

But that doesn't matter because the Luxor is not really Egyptian. It is Egyptoid. You enter through a ten-story Sphinx, twice the size of the original, which the hotel's bulk would have dwarfed. "We went with the closest sandstone color we could," says Hay. "But we did take some liberties, such as giving our Sphinx a nose." Also, this Sphinx's eyes shoot laser beams at an obelisk bearing a frieze of baboon gods. The lasers also beam into the dancing waters of the Karnak Lagoon. And, as the hotel literature points out, "a water screen appears with projections of King Tut."

Drawn into the hotel by a mysterious force (shall we call it hype?), you are greeted by two animatronic dromedaries with the unlikely names of Jody and Elias. They do shtick. "Hey, Jody, look over there—I think the Luxor's sprung a leak, and it must be bad because they've got a barge running through it!" says Elias, who sounds fresh from the family farm in Kansas. "Don't be silly," says the more worldly Jody. "That's the river Nile." Elias is incredulous: "Here in Las Vegas?"

Yes, Elias, the Luxor really does have an artificial Nile. It is skinny enough to jump over, and it smells of chlorine. But barges drift downstream, carrying hotel guests through tunnels decorated with Egyptian art and relics. Replicated, of course.

Whatever it takes to draw you into the casino, where all those slots go *plink-plink-plinkety* . . . But the Luxor and the other new Strip hotels no longer offer just blackjack and video poker, with side orders of "Old Blue Eyes." These days, in their own way, the casinos care about "family values."

"Our biggest draw is from 600 miles around, which means L.A., San Francisco, Denver, Phoenix . . ." says Hay. "A few years ago, you'd drop the kids off at Grandma's on Friday night, drive to Las Vegas for a quick getaway and go back on Sunday. Now people arrive on Thursday and bring their kids, so we're creating an environment like Disney did in Florida." That means blending reality with fantasy. For instance, the Luxor is not merely a hotel. It also is a story.

To get ready for the story, in which you will be an

Author Richard Wolkomir says he did not succumb to the lure of lucre in Las Vegas. During his sojourn there, he lost a total of only 75 cents in the slot machines.

actor, take one of the Luxor's 16 "inclinators" to the 27th floor, the top of the atrium. The pyramid's slanting walls preclude normal, straight-up elevators, so you ascend at a 39-degree angle, suspended from tracks. You emerge on a balcony. On your left are doors to guest rooms—2,526 rooms line the pyramid's epidermis. On your right is the vertiginous atrium. You look down (way down) to your next stop, the base's "Attractions Level."

Crammed into the Attractions Level are emporiums such as the Papyrus restaurant, the Scarab Shop and VirtuaLand, a hot-from-Tokyo video arcade. But they are peripheral. The real draws are the three sites constituting the "Secrets of the Luxor Pyramid Trilogy"—a ziggurat-style pyramid, a brooding Manhattanscape and an ominous black plastic cliff known as the Theater of Time. The Trilogy purports to explain the inspiration for this pyramid in the Mojave.

So ride down to the Attractions Level and take in the show. Starting at the pyramid, you enter a stone vault. A TV tuned to the news is reporting that the Luxor's developer—presented as a clean-cut yuppie—along with an earnest young archaeologist named Carina, wearing designer jodhpurs, has discovered an ancient pyramid. It is buried two miles down, beneath your feet. A belligerent Army colonel insists the pyramid be declared top secret because it contains toad-shaped levitator vehicles. Our hero—where else would the hero be a casino developer?—insists the pyramid should be open to all. Presumably, he means at a suitable admission price. Meanwhile, an evil Dr. Osiris plans to seize the pyramid for himself.

Now we are hurried into an open-walled industrial elevator for the two-mile descent. The developer and the colonel, still spatting, ride down in an adjacent elevator. But Dr. Osiris has cut our cable! We plummet headlong, but our hero, from the athletic-altruistic school of developers, sets his elevator into free fall, stretches over the abyss and—in mid-plummet—reconnects our elevator's brake! Just short of crashing, we jolt to a safe stop.

No time to say thanks. No time to notice that our elevator is a simulation or that the developer and the colonel in the adjacent elevator were on film. We have penetrated a "security area." We board a levitator car and take off. But Dr. Osiris is after us. Fleeing, we zoom up temple walls and drop, wrenchingly, our levitator yawing and bucking. Mostly, we keep our eyes closed.

But we get out, just in time to rush to the Manhattanscape, for the Trilogy's second segment, which turns out to be a TV talk show featuring the previous characters—and us, as the booing and cheering audience. Then we hurry on to the Theater of Time. Thanks to a seven-story movie screen, we visit alternate futures. The bad future awaiting us, if we don't shape up, looks grim—we'll all be trapped in a bleak, gray cityscape. But we also visit our potential good future, apparently a land-

No need to head to Abu Simbel: Luxor visitors can cruise an ersatz Nile in a barge with a guide at the helm.

At the Luxor, the entertainment has included such extravaganzas as choreographed chariot races.

In a Luxor virtual reality arcade, tourists get behind the wheel of race cars for simulated driving kicks.

scape of posh California shopping malls populated entirely by hordes of horticulturists.

And if all that is not enough for one hotel, consider this: the Luxor's apex, says Cliff Hay, "is the most powerful light in the world." It beams upward with 40 billion candlepower. On clear nights, pilots of airliners cruising over Los Angeles, 250 miles away, can see the beam.

And the Luxor is just one of the Strip's new hyperhotels. More are coming. Two centuries ago, Las Vegas was just a moist patch in the desert between lunarlike mountain ranges. The Southern Paiute eked out a living here. Mostly it was home to creosote bushes, Joshua trees, Gila monsters, chuckwallas. Summers were frying-pan hot. But enough moisture seeped up to grow some grass, and Spanish explorers dubbed it "Las Vegas," meaning "the meadows." John C. Frémont and Kit Carson scouted the valley. In 1854 a new mail route from Salt Lake City to San Diego passed through Las Vegas. It became a wagon road in 1865, serving nearby mines.

The big bonanza: legalized gambling

Boom times hit in 1902, when the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad made Las Vegas a midroute supply depot. The town built its first hotel, 30 rooms under a canvas roof. In 1928, when Congress approved building Hoover Dam nearby—all those kilowatts and dollars!—ecstatic Las Vegans trooped to the site for a prayer of thanksgiving. In 1931 came the final bonanza: Nevada legalized gambling.

Architect Alan Hess, whose book *Viva Las Vegas* meticulously traces the city's evolution via architectural mutation, notes that the Western desert "freed Las Vegas from the distractions and inhibitions of the East." In other words, enabled it to go nuts. Las Vegas turned itself into a cowpoke theme park. As the Last Frontier casino sloganized, "The Early West in Modern Splendor." One casino hired a bewhiskered prospector to stand out front and regale visitors with malarkey.

In the 1940s, just outside town, the automobile spawned the Strip. According to Hess, "the Las Vegas Strip was based on the motel set on a thousand-foot frontage." In 1946, Bugsy Siegel—not the first gangster to blow into Vegas—took over work on the Flamingo, expanding the architecture to include California modern. Hotel wars erupted, starting with pool duels.

The Desert Inn builds a figure-eight pool rimmed with cabanas? The Last Frontier, across the highway, fires back with a heated parking-lot-size pool with a subsurface observation room and a poolside bar. Then the Desert Inn replaces its old pool with a new one, even bigger. The nearby Sands ups the size ante. The Tropicana retaliates with underwater Muzak.

Take-no-prisoners fights over the placement and scale of hotel signs broke out. In 1951 the downtown Pioneer Club brought in heavy artillery when it put up Vegas Vic, a 60-foot-tall cowpuncher smoking a neon cigarette. By the 1960s journalist Tom Wolfe would describe the visual cacophony of the Strip's signage as "Boomerang Modern, Palette Curvilinear, Flash Gordon Ming-Alert Spiral, McDonald's Hamburger Parabola, Mint Casino Elliptical and Miami Beach Kidney."

Mostly, the war was fought with neon. Downtown became known as "Glitter Gulch." At night you see tidal waves of turquoise, auroral sheets of pulsating pink and orange, yellow sparkles shining on black, white lights dripping down a facade like rain . . .

But—suddenly—all that sparkles is passé. To compete with what is now evolving out on the Strip, downtown is turning itself into a four-block mall, with light shows and computerized animatrons under a canopy of twinkling artificial stars. However, the real action is just beyond the city limits, where the Strip, exquisitely sensitive to demographic ripples and having passed through its Wild West stages and its motel-with-a-big-pool epoch and its high-rise modern period, is metamorphosing into something vaguely extraterrestrial.

"Gaming is such a fragile industry that there's always been talk of diversifying our economy," says Manny

Once you cross the threshold of the MGM Grand, guarded by an 88-foot-high lion (opposite), a fantasy world unfolds, replete with a 21,000-square-foot pool offering the ultimate in amenities: a sandy beach.

Cortez, president of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. From his office atop the city's sprawling Convention Center, Cortez looks out on a metropolitan area now nearing one million residents, fastest growing in the country. But Las Vegas is a little spooked. Getting enough of the desert West's scarce water means dickering with competing interests and with neighboring states. Also, the resort industry generates about 60 percent of the city's employment. When New Jersey turned Atlantic City into a rival gambling center, with other casinos popping up everywhere from Indian reservations to riverboats, Las Vegas swallowed hard. "We've found," says Cortez, "that people no longer want to be in an audience—they want to be part of the entertainment."

So one of the planned Strip resorts, "New York, New York," will enable you to experience Manhattan without having to visit the city where garbage trucks rumble under your hotel window at 3 A.M. Another coming-soon resort, "Beau Rivage," promises Riviera-like boating and waterskiing in sidewinder habitat. Even more loopy, in a way, will be Desert Kingdom. Ignore the Mojave right outside. Pretend you're in the Sahara.

Behind it all, says Cortez, is the time-squeezed two-income family, opting for minivacations. Las Vegas' gambling revenues subsidize inexpensive hotel rooms and restaurants. "So," Cortez explains, "it's affordable to drive here for a few days, especially if we provide entertainment for both the kids and the adults." Meanwhile, planeloads have been arriving from other countries: Canada, Mexico, Germany, Australia and Japan.

With $16 billion-plus in annual tourism revenues on the line, Cortez's pulse-takers have found that, although 90 percent of the city's visitors do gamble while in town, mostly feeding quarters into slot machines, only 11 percent actually come to gamble. And so the Strip is remaking itself into a theme park from the fourth dimension. It seems to be working: 1994's visitor count was up 20 percent over 1993's.

The megahotels are new. They're state of the art. But they're also a rewrapping of what the Strip has always sold: razzle-dazzle. Las Vegas, after all, produced Liberace, a one-man Glitter Gulch. From a rhinestone-studded limousine, he would emerge onstage wearing a rhinestone-lined fur cape and play a rhinestone-emblazoned piano. He had one Rolls-Royce finished in a mosaic of tiny mirrors and etched with galloping horses, and another painted in red, white and blue stars and stripes. One typical costume, a pink suit-cape combo

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featuring an undersea motif, complete with scallop-shell collar and embroidered with beads, sequins and jewels, weighed more than 200 pounds. So don't even ask if a 30-story black pyramid is in good taste. Who cares?

Besides, the Luxor isn't all that big. Not compared with the new MGM Grand just across the street, the world's most humongous hotel. It is electric green, since the theme here is the Emerald City of Oz. You walk through a golden lion into a casino as big as Luxembourg, packed with slot machines and dice-throwing grannies from Pasadena. You pass restaurants advertising their wares with sculptured hamburgers the size of Humvees, oozing giant plaster tomato slices and pickles. Eventually, you find yourself (somehow) in MGM Grand Adventures, an outdoor theme park where you can ride a Mississippi steamboat or visit Casablanca.

Building the world's biggest hotel cost a billion dollars. That covered such items as 18,000 doors (enough for 1,600 standard three-bedroom houses). The hotel has 93 elevators, and its 30-story central elevator core alone is the size of a standard skyscraper. Construction consumed 17 million square feet of Sheetrock, enough for 11,500 houses, plus 18,000 tons of air-conditioning equipment, enough for 5,500 houses.

Bigness palls? Try cute. Across the Strip, the new Excalibur is a fairy-tale castle with crenelated walls sprouting white towers and turrets glowing red, blue, green, orange, gold. Inside, minstrels stroll. Even the carpet vacuumers sport tights and doublets. Kids hanging on to their parents' hands wear brass helmets sprouting white ox horns. In the downstairs arena, wenches and varlets serve a medieval dinner (no silverware). Knights joust on real horses. At dramatic moments the audience is encouraged to throw up its hands and yell "Huzzah!"

Farther up the Strip, a crowd in front of the Mirage is watching an erupting volcano spout flames. Lava, in the form of illuminated water, oozes down its sides. Inside, a tour group is checking in and gazing, mesmerized, at the aquarium-size tank of tropical fish and sharks that forms the wall behind the registration desk. Water cascades over fake cliffs, and palm trees in the dome-enclosed rain forest rattle their fronds in synthetic Tahitian breezes. Two white tigers belonging to Siegfried and Roy, the resident megastar magicians, snooze on fake rock ledges in a fake jungle. And outside, in pools, swim seven Atlantic bottle-nosed dolphins, including three born right here in the Mojave.

Still farther along the Strip, in Circus Circus' new Grand Slam Canyon—a plastic Grand Canyonoid under a pink dome—roller coasters have some kids screaming, while others stare transfixed at animatronic dinosaurs that munch plastic leaves. One dinosaur spits at them.

Back at the Luxor, John O'Looney, who was then the general manager of the complex, says: "They keep raising the bar." In his subterranean office beneath the pyramid's river Nile and the Theater of Time, he is explaining why Las Vegas is building plastic grand canyons and glass pyramids: "The customer wants an experience you can't find in Paducah or Phoenix."

On the Attractions Level, waiting to enter the Theater of Time, one of those customers, Roy Stuart—he's originally from London but is now a realtor in Victoria, British Columbia—has found much in Las Vegas to ponder. He used to teach theater at a Toronto high school, and he sees the Strip as materialized fiction. "I keep thinking of *Brave New World*," he says. "It's all theater because nobody can sit and do nothing today. Everybody has to be entertained. Younger people don't read anymore, and you don't need an imagination for this—it's all provided for you."

All about spend, spend, spend

He is not the only ponderer. Blair Kamin, architecture critic at the *Chicago Tribune*, has coined a term for the new fantasy hotels: "architainment." He says the developers have turned the Strip into a laboratory for the "edge cities" that are now engulfing exurbia with burger emporiums and office towers, places where you rarely see a human outside a car. In Las Vegas, he says, "it's all about finding new ways to suck people in, to get them to spend." Yet, the new hotels have produced a surprise: urbanization. Pedestrians now throng the Strip as if it were Fifth Avenue in the heart of Manhattan.

One reason for the urbanizing effect, according to author-architect Alan Hess, is that each of the new superhotels is a kind of mini-city. The casino is the central public square, he says. It is surrounded by high-rise housing (hotel towers), parks (pool terraces), entertainment (hotel theaters and arcades), restaurants and shops. A new mall at Caesars Palace even has an artificial sky. You shop "outdoors" without the inconvenience of weather. "We don't know as much about Las Vegas as we need to," observes Hess.

Marshall Fishwick, professor of humanities and communication studies at Virginia Tech, takes a darker view: "Vegas sums up a certain kind of American gigantism, the gigantism of the huckster rather than the builder." Behind the fantasy hotels, he believes, is the larger phenomenon of society's entertainment addiction, which he traces to the waning of upward mobility. "Entertainment has become the bread and butter of the American psyche, now driving the nightly news, politics,

Las Vegas' neon-dazzled downtown (top), renowned as Glitter Gulch, faces competition from new hotels such as the MGM Grand with its own casino (center); for traditional glitz, tourists take in the Liberace Museum.

Inside the Forum Shops at Caesars Palace casino, guests can stroll arcade where fountains play in "Florence."

education," he says. "My father had no time for TV because he was creating a business, but my kids have lots of time because they work at less-demanding jobs. Diminishing expectations lead to rising entertainment."

One component of the entertainment proffered in Las Vegas is the "democratization of privilege," says Robert Bruegmann, professor of architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Middle-class vacationers can dine like dukes and play baccarat. But he is unsure whether the Strip—with its new theme hotels—is leading or following. "You can think of Paris as caught in amber, a 19th-century theme park," he says. In Los Angeles, he suggests, Rodeo Drive is a theme park where the theme is shopping.

Whatever the underpinnings, the Strip's reconfiguration as a synthetic play world is good for America's trade imbalance. Francis Domoy, director of the School of Food, Hotel, and Travel Management at Rochester Institute of Technology, cites all those Deutsche marks, pesos and yen left behind at the gaming tables and checkout desks. Also, post-Cold War defense contractors now market some of their high-tech wares, such as lasers, to the entertainment industry, including Las Vegas. "We're using technology to produce fantasies for consumption by the world," Domoy says.

John O'Looney puts it more vividly: "Who in their wildest dreams would expect to see a pirate-ship battle right outside their hotel room?" That would be at Treasure Island, where the sign features an enormous grinning skull topped with a pirate's bandanna, with cutlasses crossed under its chin. Inside, even the chandeliers display fake bones, and restaurants bear names like "Black Spot Grille" and "Smuggler's Cantina." One eatery, The Plank, is supposed to be "an intimate pirate's library," raising fascinating questions about buccaneer literacy, and whether Blackbeard preferred lyric poetry or philosophical works or maybe the *Iliad.* But Treasure Island's thematic pièce de résistance is out front.

From the Strip, looking across the recycled, chlorinated waters of Buccaneer Bay, you see an 18th-century pseudo-Caribbean village, overhung with palms. Stuccoed houses—sun-faded pink, tan, yellow or seaweed green—sprout ivy from their eaves. Some of the mullioned windows have intricately carved frames, faded and cracked by the sun. The weathered wharf is a jumble of wooden kegs and coiled hawsers. Draped over an upside-down longboat that has been hauled ashore are drying sails. A fire burns in an outdoor hearth.

Docked in the harbor is the *Hispaniola,* a full-size reproduction of a pirate ship, manned by bearded salts wearing ripped breeches and rings in their ears, as nasty a crew as central casting could provide. Every 90 minutes, huge crowds watch a British frigate sail around the hotel and confront the riff-raff on the *Hispaniola.*

"We've gotten into competition with the whole world, and the whole world's gotten into competition with us, so we've gone a step beyond, and sometimes two steps—we create showmanship," says Joel Bergman, one of Treasure Island's principal architects. He is having lunch in the Black Spot Grille, discussing his creation while fielding mysterious calls on his pocket telephone ("We've got a wandering construction crane out in Lake Tahoe!") and greetings from hotel staffers ("Gustav! I was just in Budapest last week!").

"It cost $32 million to concoct the pirate battle out front, and it's a fortune to operate—but it's worth every penny," Bergman says. "The rigging on the ships is authoritatively tied because in this town we use a lot of hemp in the theaters, and a lot of the people who work with it have made rope-tying a hobby." The ships are fiberglass on a steel frame, with steel masts. "But the detailing is as authentic as we could make it," he declares, speaking as another Vegas fantasist devoted to realism at the molecular level.

And now it's showtime at Buccaneer Bay. Already some 300 spectators have gathered on the sidewalk and are spilling into the street. On the *Hispaniola* the scurvy

crew is climbing the rigging like rats, while on the dock a steel band plays music to unload plunder by.

"Hey," rasps the captain at two of his thugs who are wrestling with a chest that drips pearl necklaces and emerald bracelets. "We didn't spend four months at sea robbing the Brits to have you dropping our gold on the deck!" Out from behind the hotel sails the frigate, flying the Union Jack. The pirates cringe, but their captain will have none of it: "Just tea and crumpets for the likes of them!" Blunderbusses are passed out on both ships, and cannon poke out the gun ports. On the sidewalk, a boy sitting atop parental shoulders announces in a high voice, "Dad, we're going to be caught in the crossfire!"

"Mr. Smythe," barks the British officer, "deliver a warning shot across their bow so they get our meaning." *Ka-boom!* Smoke puffs from one of the frigate's gun ports. Water geysers up off the *Hispaniola*'s bow.

Now the two ships exchange cannon fire and rifle volleys. "A broadside into their powder warehouse, Mr. Smythe!" commands the British captain. *Ka-boom!* The pirate ship bursts into flames. Men plummet from the rigging into the bay. But the pirates rally! *Ka-boom!* "That's one for you, British scum!" The crowd ooohs. The British frigate is hit! Smoking! It's sinking! In front of everyone's eyes, as men slide from the deck into the roiled waters, the ship lists onto one side and sinks. "Ahoy, you landlubbers," the pirate captain calls to the sidewalk crowd, motioning toward Treasure Island's front door. "It's time to share in our victory celebration!"

Anarchy has overcome authority. As the bemused onlookers wander on, some down the street to see the volcano blow, others across a wooden walkway into Treasure Island, the British frigate straightens itself on its underwater hinge, ready to sail behind the hotel to await the next battle in 90 minutes. Again the cannon will blast and the bay will erupt. But no matter how often the great battle of the Las Vegas Strip is fought, the outcome never changes: the pirates always win.

In the ongoing pageant at the Treasure Island hotel, the stalwart British frigate *Britannia*, manned by a dozen stuntmen as captain and crew, unleashes a volley in the pirates' direction. The Brits always lose to miscreants.

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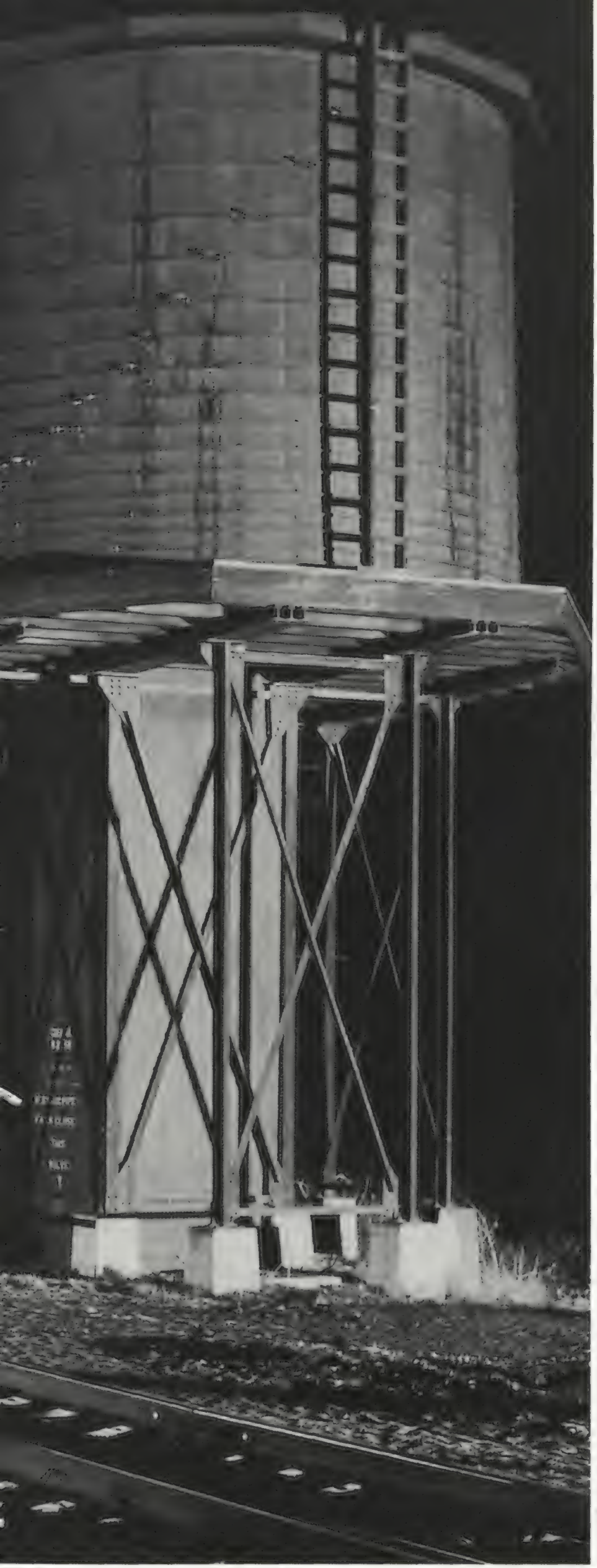

Steam locomotives steal the spotlight

Photographer O. Winston Link documented the final days of steam engines on the Norfolk and Western Railway, the last main line to use them

In January 1955, when photographer O. Winston Link hurried through a commercial assignment so that he could go see Norfolk and Western Train No. 2 on its run from Roanoke to New York, two durable pieces of American technology were nearing the end of the line. Steam engines had been replaced by diesels on every main railroad line but the N&W. And the cumbersome large-format camera was being supplanted by the compact 35mm-type and the "candid" photographs that it made possible. A train buff since childhood, Link spent the next five years making 2,400 photographs—each meticulously planned and composed on his big cameras—to document the final days of steam.

This monumental effort by Link can be seen in *The Last Steam Railroad in America,* with text by Thomas Garvey, published this month by Harry N. Abrams.

Link, who quickly won the support of N&W president R. H. Smith, recalls: "I never knew what word he passed down the line, but it seemed to me that he gave me 2,300 miles of track, 450 steam locomotives and all the employees of the N&W to help me get the job done."

His most spectacular photographs—technical masterpieces—were made at night. "I can't move the sun—and it's always in the wrong place—and I can't even move the tracks, so I had to create my own environment through lighting." After studying the site, Link would spend hours in the darkness strategically placing flashbulbs to illuminate every relevant detail. With such elaborate setups, he usually could make only one shot—an image of power frozen in time.

Today, at 80, Link has outlived the age of steam, but in Thomas Garvey's words, "He photographed America as he wished it to forever remain."

Marlane A. Liddell

Link set his camera at a low angle so as to enhance the size of locomotive No. 2172 against the water tanks.

Link, who photographed train announcer Buck Stewart at Roanoke Station, described the man's voice as a "combination of gravel and Southern drawl."

Detail of portrait that Link seamlessly pieced from seven negatives shows one of the last U.S.-built switching locomotives—and its crew.

In Link's picture essay on the N&W's Abingdon Branch, he caught brakeman J.M.(Skutch) Stevens dozing after a long workday aboard the "Virginia Creeper."

Link fired a bank of 26 flashbulbs to light the scene of three locomotives simultaneously loading coal from a tipple at Shaffers Crossing in Virginia.

At Boaz Siding near Roanoke, Link caught crewmen of helper engine as they waited to push the next passing train up the Blue Ridge.

Disappointed with his daytime shot, Link used flashbulbs to highlight swimmers and train against the powerful geometry of the bridges.

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By Donald Dale Jackson

'I lost a *baby*, and when I got him back he was a toddler'

The child was returned thanks in large part to a national clearinghouse that employs the latest technology to locate missing kids

It is early Wednesday morning at the Arlington, Virginia, headquarters of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), and Charles Houston Pickett, a case manager, is working the phone. A large, affable, forceful man with a cultivated good-old-boy style, Pickett has just received a data sheet on a teenage mother who says she gave her 2-year-old daughter to an uncle, only she doesn't know the uncle's name or where he lives. Pickett is talking to the girl's stepmother, who reported the child missing.

"Now, ma'am," he asks gently, "what are your feelin's about what your daughter did?"

"It's hard to believe," the woman replies, "but I think maybe she done what she said." She tells Pickett that the uncle is the brother of the girl's natural mother and that he lives some 500 miles away. Pickett fears that the girl might have killed her child.

"Do you think she could have hurt her?" he asks. "Did you ever see her strike her or shake her?"

"No, just shook the bassinet once," the woman replies.

"Does she have any reason to want to hide the baby?" Pickett asks. The woman says no, then volunteers that her stepdaughter is with her.

Pickett sits at a desk in a corner of a large, sunny room filled with about a dozen people, his workspace bordered by a waist-high partition. This is the action room, the hub of NCMEC's offices on the fifth floor of a downtown building, but the atmosphere is subdued, a blend of modulated voices, muted telephones and gentle tapping on computer keyboards. Pickett's soft Southern manner becomes even milder when the 16-year-old mother comes on the phone.

"We're just glad to know you're OK, y'know?" he says, "and we want to make sure your baby's OK. Sometimes babies get hurt." The girl says she expects the child to be returned soon but insists that she doesn't know where her daughter is. Pickett fishes for an explanation—"Did you feel like you didn't want to be, y'know, tied down?"—without much luck, then gives her his number and hangs up.

He expels a long, whistling sigh. "I don't think anyone wants to hurt this baby," he says, "but you know, some of these people, well . . ." He shakes his head. "It's like, 'Here, take my baby, I'll give you a call sometime, but ohhh *damn*, I forgot to get your number.'"

Pickett, a onetime Virginia state trooper, is one of five case managers at the Center. With a caseload of roughly a thousand, he spends his days on the phone with parents, police, employees of state missing-children clearinghouses and people affiliated with nonprofit agencies doing similar work.

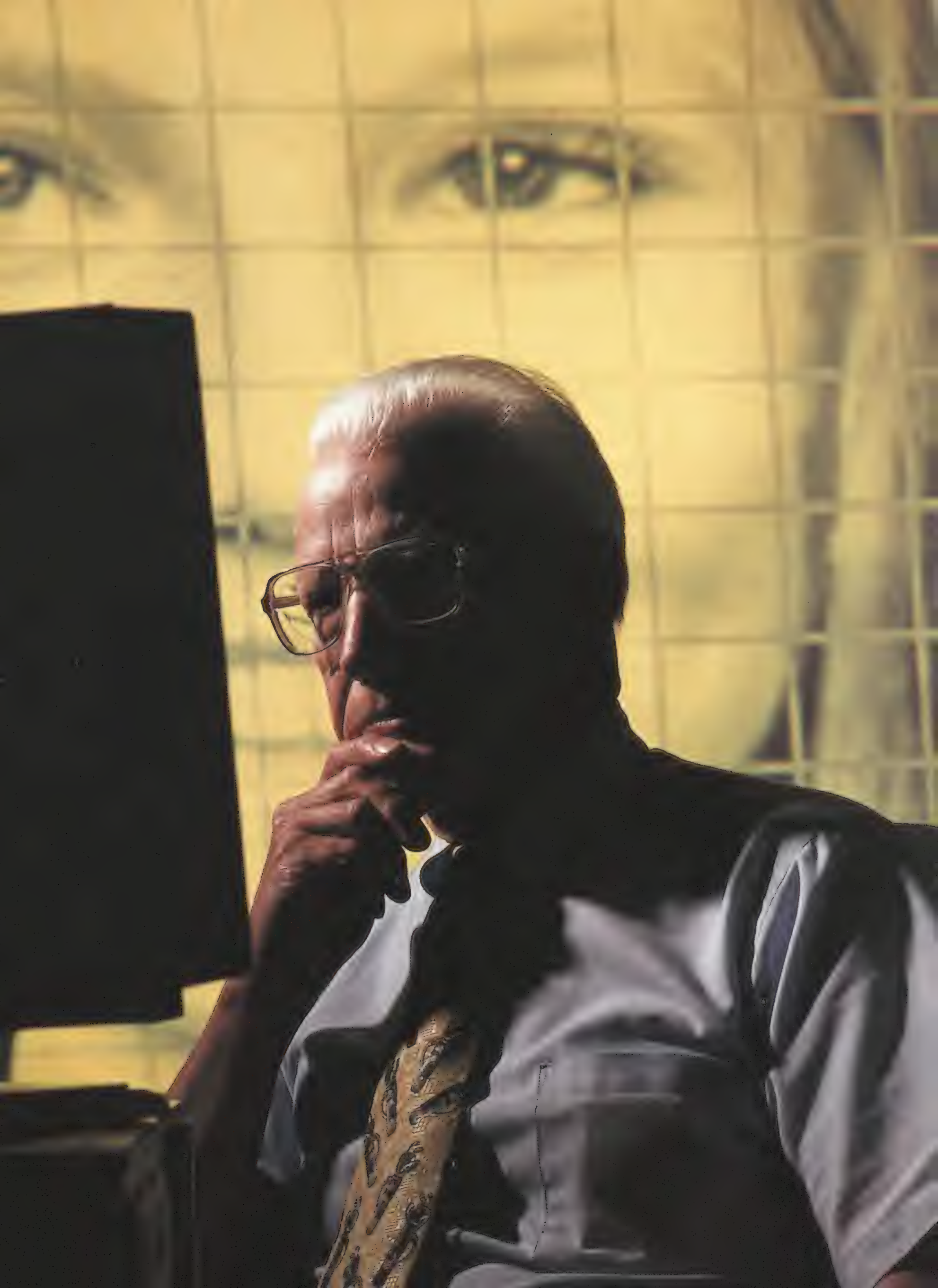
Ernest Allen, the Center's president, estimates that more than three-quarters of a million children under the age of 18 disappear for some length of time in this country every year. Though most are short-term incidents, about 5,700 active cases are carried in the Center's computerized files. The NCMEC lists four categories of missing children: runaways, family abductions (usually by the noncustodial parent after a divorce or custody hearing), nonfamily abductions and a catchall category labeled "lost, injured or otherwise missing." Between January 1990, when the records were fully computerized, and March 1995, NCMEC case managers handled 9,199 runaways, 4,979 family abductions, 486 nonfamily abductions and 530 other cases. In 78 percent of these cases, totaling nearly 12,000 kids, the children were recovered; 233 of them were found dead.

Many of the Center's 50 employees, like Pickett, are ex-cops with a background of working with youngsters. Peter Banks, who coordinates the Center's communications with various on-line services, like CompuServe, was in the child-abuse unit of the District of Columbia police force. "You get addicted to kids," he says in explaining the agency's mission. "Children are defenseless, and they ask so little, just a hug or a smile. We accept protecting them as our responsibility."

The Justice Department established the Center in 1984 as a nonprofit agency funded by both government money (from the Department's budget) and private do-

NCMEC artist Horace Heafner studies an image on computer used to "age" photographs of missing youth. One such picture is projected on the wall behind him.

Photographs by Kay Chernush



nations. Its goals, spelled out by Congress, included the creation of a toll-free hot line for missing-children reports and leads, provision of technical help and training for law-enforcement agencies, and coordination of the public and private programs in the field. The Center maintains a data bank on missing kids and produces posters with photographs and "age-progressed" pictures of children who have been missing for several years. Though it has access to certain FBI data, the NCMEC is a communication-coordination hub lacking law-enforcement powers.

Allen, who was director of public safety in Louisville, Kentucky, before becoming president of the Center, sees it as a serendipitous blend of high tech and social values. "IBM, Intel and other computer companies gave us our first high-end computers for age progression," he explains. "We're a living laboratory for computers. What we do is a real-world application of how to use computer technology to solve social problems."

High-tech equipment saves precious time

Sophisticated software enables retired FBI forensic artist Horace Heafner to age children from the way they looked when they vanished to the present. High-resolution faxes can transmit pictures almost simultaneously to hundreds of police departments within hours, sometimes minutes, of an abduction. An infant found abandoned in Idaho or Alabama can be quickly identified by cross-checking the Center's data banks. Even Charles Pickett, a networker and schmoozer by inclination, takes advantage of the high-tech equipment.

"I'm gonna run some data banks on this uncle, see if we can maybe flush him out," Pickett is saying now. He asks case analyst Cathy Nahirny to check the name against computerized national phone directories and other public records. A few minutes later he's back on the phone with a friend, a state trooper working on the case. The trooper agrees to try to squeeze the uncle by telling the family that a nationwide alarm for the child is about to be broadcast.

Cathy Nahirny returns with a note from a hot-line call. "How'd you like to resolve the Jones case?" she asks. The note is a lead on an abduction dating back to 1990, when noncustodial father Billy Jones (not his real name) abducted his 4½-year-old son in Las Vegas. Since then, father and son have been using aliases and moving frequently. The case meets the qualifications the Center specifies for its involvement in family abductions. A child is missing and custody is clear: the law has been broken. A felony warrant has been issued for Jones.

The new lead comes from a relative of Jones' current girlfriend, who saw the advertising card containing pictures and facts on the case sent out that week by ADVO, a direct mail company in Hartford, Connecticut, that

Here are 12 of the 5,700 cases on file at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Guadalupe Aguirre (left) was abducted in 1992 from Fresno, California. D'Wan Christian Sims disappeared from a shopping mall in Livonia, Michigan, in 1994.

Sarah Natasha Coleman (left) was reported missing from Phoenix in August 1994. Chance Lee Wackerhagen was abducted from Lockhart, Texas, in December 1993.

Richard Vardaman jr. (left) and his sister Moneisa Shayne Vardaman have been missing since June 1994, when they were abducted from Glendale, Arizona.

Many of the youngsters were taken by noncustodial parents. If you see any of them, call 1-800-843-5678.

Amanda Christine Justen (left) was reported missing from McCullom Lake, Illinois, in March 1994. Roman Lamar Henderson was abducted from Miami in June 1994.

Crystal Ann Tymich (left) was last seen playing near her Los Angeles home, June 1994. Adel Bjiouat, missing since July 1994, was abducted from Raytown, Missouri.

Thomas Billy Lee Tillery (left) was last seen in Madill, Oklahoma, in September 1994. Carolina Florez was abducted late last year from New Vernon, New Jersey.

works in conjunction with the Center. Each week as a public service ADVO mails 57 million ad postcards featuring a picture of a missing child and the abductor, on the flip side, to homes all across the country.

Pickett phones the Las Vegas detective handling the case to pass on new information: the fugitives may be in Washington State. He adds a not-too-subtle prod, "I think the mother, y'know, would like to see her boy again before he's, like, *50*, if you see what I'm sayin'." Pickett then calls a contact at the missing-children clearinghouse in Olympia, Washington, and asks her to check school records under several names. He's cooking now, in his element. "The chase is on," he says cheerily as the phone buzzes again. He arranges for a recent picture of the boy to be faxed to Washington.

But before he can make another call, Pickett gets a new assignment from Ben Ermini, the former Yonkers, New York, police captain who is director of case management. Two prep school boys from Pennsylvania have been missing for several days, probably runaways. The parents think they went to Florida or New York. The well-heeled families have hired a private investigator and faxed good recent color photographs to the Center.

Runaways don't know the dangers

Pickett gets a quick printout of a list of airports in Pennsylvania and Florida and highlights those whose security people will receive the high-resolution pictures he'll send by fax. He calls the local police in Pennsylvania, fills them in on what he's done and learns a little more—one of the boys has talked of living on the streets. He calls a woman at a missing-children's agency in New York who monitors street kids—"She knows more about them than anyone," he says. Seattle is the most popular mecca for runaways at the moment, but the boys didn't mention it. The Center also keeps a list of Grateful Dead concert sites, since runaways sometimes join the "Deadheads" who follow the rock group.

Speed is crucial in the pursuit of runaways. "The more time passes," Pickett says, "the hungrier they get and the more likely they are to get raped, commit a crime, break in somewhere, get hurt or get in some kind of trouble. These two boys don't know the dangers."

The phone rings again: another lead on the Joneses. This is a man in Utah who is holding a boat belonging to Jones but doesn't know where he is. "He's got a *$60,000* boat," Pickett says, his eyes widening, "and he's wanted for stealing a car and furniture." Still another caller shifts the chase to Texas. A woman who claims to know Jones saw the ADVO card and called to say he runs a small business in Houston, but she doesn't know the name of the company or where he lives. She thinks he left town the day before, when he saw the card.

Pickett gets a data-bank search started in Texas and

checks in with a Houston contact, hoping to track down Jones' girlfriend. "You women," he chides the contact, "you get married, you arbitrarily take some man's name, then we have to try and find you." He appears able to wink with his voice. He suspects now that the Joneses may be headed for the house of the girlfriend's father in San Antonio, which he found out about through another artfully calculated call. He tries another data-bank search there. No luck.

The next morning begins with good news. A call comes from the sister of one of the prep school runaways. Pickett repeats her words matter-of-factly: "Picked up in Orlando at 3 A.M. today in a convenience store." Their four-day lark ended less than 16 hours after they were assigned a case manager at the National Center. The Center's media package had gone out shortly after the FBI's National Crime Information Center had transmitted a bulletin on the boys. Orlando police recognized them and picked them up.

A few hours later, one of the fathers is on the phone to Pickett, who appears embarrassed by the call. "Oh, he said he's in my debt and all, he was getting mushy," Pickett reports. "He was just damned pleased, and probably surprised that the system worked. The boys spent the night in a detention center, and that may have been a good dose of reality for them."

But for all his aw-shucks protestations, Pickett is touched by the gratitude. "You bond with some of these people, and when you get that thank-you call there's real heart in it," he acknowledges. One such call came several months ago from a young, unmarried mother whose son was taken at age 10 months by his father, a fugitive on a sexual-assault charge. The mother found the National Center and Pickett after months of going nowhere with local and state police. "I never met Charles, but I have this mental picture of him," she said later, "tall and gentle and calm. I was always in such a panic when I talked to him, and I must have called 30 times." Pickett sought help from an ex-private investigator, who tracked the father to Florida, where the FBI found the boy six months after he was taken. "I lost a *baby*, and when I got him back he was a toddler. He was walking and talking," the mother says. "Charles made the phone calls, he lit a fire. Things started to happen when he got involved." When Pickett learned that the young woman was indigent, he had the Center arrange a free flight to Florida for her reunion with her son.

Back in the action room, meanwhile, things still haven't clicked into place on the Jones case. More calls have come in, but only one has yielded anything new—the boy, now almost 10, apparently attends a private school. Pickett gets back on the phone to Texas. There are days like this, he says. "You put out your lines, you move them around and you wait." One of Pickett's other cases has ended grimly. The body of a 6-year-old girl missing since 1992 has turned up in an attic in Tennessee; a teenage boy is under arrest. "It was a bad situation," Pickett says. "The child may have been tied up a couple of days before her death."

A waiter at a Pizza Hut in Ohio calls to report that he served lunch to the "Joneses," but he gives the wrong ages and descriptions. Another caller says "Jones" has a brown van or maybe a gray BMW. Pickett noodles with friends on the phone in hopes of coming up with a new

Hot-line staffers at the Center take reports on missing children. The eight hot-line stations receive about 650 calls a day.

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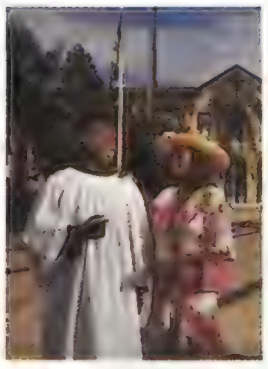

Codrington College, theological seat of learning in the parish of St. John.

There are two main religions in Barbados. The other is Anglican.

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Morgan Lewis sugar mill, the only surviving sugar windmill in the Caribbean.

BARBADOS

THE BEST A VACATION CAN BE

The eight small images show various steps in the "age progression" of a missing Japanese boy from 15 months to 6 years. The large photograph, a split image, shows baby (on the right) and finished age progression (on the left) that incorporates mother, father and child.

avenue of attack. "Damn, I *hate* talkin' to people dumber than me!" he exclaims. For the moment, Billy Jones and his son have withstood the blast of attention detonated by the ADVO card. Pickett, a drooping bloodhound, sorely needs a pick-me-up, and at last he gets one. "They got that little baby?" he says into the phone, smiling broadly. This is the 2-year-old who was deposited with an uncle. "Left her at the door and ran off. Now that's fine. Maybe we squeezed just tight enough."

Five floors below Pickett's office, in an isolated cluster of rooms, age-progression specialist Horace Heafner sits at his computer console and studies a photograph of a 15-month-old Japanese boy. Heafner is a courtly North Carolinian who was once chief of the FBI's graphics section. Artistic by training and temperament, he works on the technological frontier at the missing-children center. If Pickett is the old-fashioned networker with a Rolodex full of first-name contacts, Heafner is the soul of the new machine.

At the moment he's worried. The child in the picture he has been given is too young. He wants his subjects to be at least 2, past the puffy baby stage and with distinctive facial features emerging. But this is a very special case. The child was kidnapped five years ago by members of the Aum Shinrikyo sect, the group recently blamed for putting nerve gas into the Tokyo subway system. Heafner has been asked to age the boy to 6 for a Japanese television program.

He'll do it with a blend of art and science, merging his talent with a software program that helps him replicate children's growth patterns—for example, faces develop dramatically until about age 7, whereas cranium sizes remain about the same. Heafner creates a portrait of a child's face on his screen by manipulating several of the 480,000 pixels, or tiny graphic units in a range of shades from white to dark gray, with the two buttons on his computer mouse. The first age-progression software was developed in the early 1980s by two MIT scientists working with a commercial artist. Heafner, still with the FBI at the time, kept tabs on their work and visited them in Cambridge, Massachusetts. When NCMEC was given a more advanced version of the imaging software in 1989, Heafner signed on to run it.

He works in a small room filled with the computers, scanners and printers that convert photographs to video and digital images. There are also a desk and several cabinets, one of which holds thousands of photographs of children that he uses for age and ethnic reference. Missing-child posters plaster the walls. A snapshot over his desk shows two anguished-looking kids in the back of a van, a girl about 17 and a boy about 11, with their hands bound and tape over their mouths. Heafner has it there to remind himself of what he's about. The youngsters were never found.

He looks intently now at three photographs—the Japanese child at 15 months, his mother at about 6 years and his father at 4. "Likeness is in the genes," he says. "The subjective part of this work is determining which features a child gets from each parent."

He scans the child's photograph onto the screen and begins the imaging process by moving a cursor to the corners of the eyes, then enlarging a two-inch square section of the face until it fills half the screen. Moving the mouse around its pad and clicking rhythmically, he starts to change the child's looks. The shape of the corners of the eyes begins to transform, imperceptibly at

Donald Dale Jackson, who wrote about Dinotopia last month, spent a week at NCMEC, where he finally learned to appreciate the wonder of computers.

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Investigator Charles Pickett massages a source, using an old-fashioned device he still finds indispensable.

first and then noticeably. The cheekbones become more defined. Heafner dips into a tint bar with a spread of 64 black-to-white hues like a painter with a palette, brushing here, touching up there, smoothing, sharpening.

"Five or 6 is the average age I work with," he says as he moves the mouse. "The most intense growth period is from birth to 7, but by 7 a child has 75 percent of its facial growth." Heafner and his colleague Glenn Miller have age-progressed 375 children since the Center acquired the software in 1989, and 75 have been recovered. A single age progression takes two to three days.

When Heafner joined the FBI in 1945, J. Edgar Hoover's men were still required to wear hats—"felt in winter, straw in summer," he recalls. Heafner still carries himself with parade-ground bearing. As a composite-sketch specialist he produced a drawing of James Earl Ray, the assassin of Martin Luther King jr., and worked on Black Panther cases and the Patty Hearst case. "I'm fascinated by faces," he says. "I'm always looking at them. My wife and I will be at a mall and I'll nudge her and say something like, 'Look at that little mouth.'"

Back at the computer, Heafner punches in a command that allows him to superimpose grid lines over the face, then moves down the rectangular units bordered by the grid lines, lengthening the face by about a third at one stroke. The child now looks 3 or 4. The artist works the pixels again, moving and shading other parts of the face to bring them into harmony with the longer visage. He clicks a half-dozen times and suddenly a tooth appears. "Aha! Right before your livin' eyes."

Like other ex-lawmen at the Center, Heafner finds it easy to empathize with victimized children. "I think about how their minds are messed up," he says, "like this Japanese child getting mentally programmed. Some pictures we get make you weep. The children in that photo over my desk—somebody found the snapshot outside a convenience store in Florida. They never found the van and never even identified the kids." More than a fifth of the children reported to the Center in nonfamily abductions are found dead.

Not surprisingly, Heafner has been most successful when the parent who is left behind has numerous pictures of the child and both parents. In one case the father took his 2-year-old son and left the country. The mother provided Heafner with the pictures he needed. "I did an age progression to 7, and the poster went around the world," Heafner remembers. "The father came back to Florida to renew their passports and temporarily enrolled the boy in school. The FBI compared the new passport photo to my age progression. It looked so much like him that somebody asked where we got that picture of Julian." In another case a 5-year-old girl disappeared from Kansas City with her mother. Heafner age-progressed her to 12, and a playmate recognized her from the ADVO card and called the hot line. He has occasionally invited children he's helped to find to visit his office. "I let them work the mouse. They never think the age progression looks like them."

The portrait on the screen is now ready for a genetic implant. Heafner loads the photograph of the mother at age 6 into the computer and fuses it with the child's face he has aged to 4. He studies the result—a face with four eyes, bangs and a safari hat. The angle of the face in the mother's picture isn't right. "And it's just not a good picture," he complains. He decides to use the mother's eyes but scraps most of the rest of her photograph. The father's picture has problems, too. He's grimacing, which distorts his features.

Aging a child, pixel by pixel

All this takes several hours to play out, at the end of which Heafner is back with the original picture of the 15-month-old aged to 4. Now it's a matter of aging the boy, pixel by dogged pixel, lengthening the nose and ears, shadowing the eyes, sharpening the chin, adding teeth and fuller lips. Even though Heafner works rapidly, the rate of progress is something like that of an ant ascending the Empire State Building. Cumulatively, however, the difference is stunning. When he is finally finished, he has drawn a new person, a 6-year-old boy who looks like his mother, his father and himself (p. 76). "That's going to have to do it," Heafner concludes, still dissatisfied. "There's usually a moment in this work when it comes together and you feel that it's right, but it didn't happen this time."

It did happen right for Heidi and Jeremy Hodges last summer after Glenn Miller produced an age progression of Heidi's 10-year-old daughter, Heather. Within

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weeks, the Hodges were reunited with Heather, her brother Hans, now 13, and her sister Laurel, 9 (below). It had been two years since the youngsters left home on a supposedly routine visit to their father, who loaded them into a camper, authorities say, and drove off.

When she realized the children were gone, Heidi Hodges, who was awarded custody when she divorced their father, notified the police, the FBI and missing-children organizations in several states. She and Jeremy (they were married in 1990 and now have one child of their own) called NCMEC nearly every day, distributed 100,000 of their own posters and hired several private investigators. They also sent photographs to emergency rooms throughout the country, just in case Heather's asthma landed her in a hospital.

"My life was so empty," recalls Heidi, who works as a nurse at a medical center in Spokane, Washington. "We almost had an altar on our fireplace, all those pictures of them. I'd cry at work all the time." Unopened gifts began to pile up—a gold necklace for Heather, a ballerina music box for Laurel, a ten-speed bicycle for Hans. "We went out and shopped for them every Christmas, every birthday," Jeremy Hodges says. "It was kind of sad, but we had to do it."

Meanwhile the children drifted from one campsite to another until finally their father rented a farmhouse in rural Indiana. They didn't go to school and weren't allowed to play with other kids. For an entire year, they saw no one but a neighboring farmer. Forbidden to talk about their mother, they were afraid to try calling her; gradually they began to forget what she looked like. Then their father moved them to a house in Indianapolis.

A few months later, Miller, working with old photographs of Heidi and the children's father, finished his age progression of Heather, taking away her girlish bangs and giving her earrings. After an ADVO mailing distributed the picture nationwide, a woman in Indianapolis pulled the white-and-blue postcard out of her mailbox and looked curiously at the blonde-haired girl sitting in the yard across the street. Less than an hour later, police and FBI agents were on the scene.

The Hodges' reunion was thrilling but nerve-racking. Laurel barely recognized her mother. Heather was worried about her father in jail. When children have been missing for a long time, homecomings are often difficult. But Heidi says she will never forget how they hugged each other all at once. "It was the best hug I think I have ever had in my life."

Reunited after two years, Heidi Hodges and children savor time together. Laurel (at left), Heather and Hans were starting to forget what their mother looked like, when an age-progression photograph led to their rescue.

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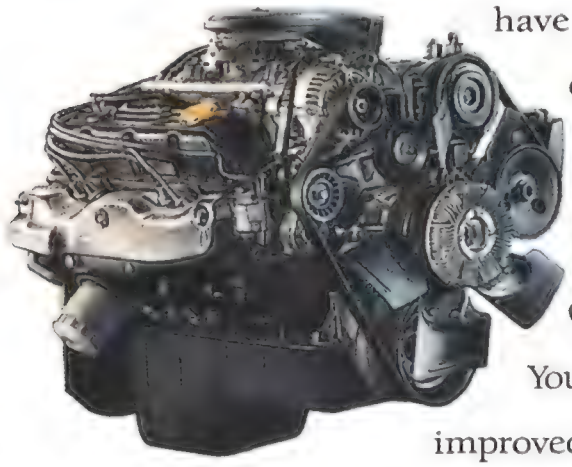

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Automotive News, 1995 Compact Sport Utility Class. †Always wear your seat belt. Jeep is a registered trademark of Chrysler Corporation.

During the past year, the Colorado River carved another millimeter into the Grand Canyon, Santa Ana winds shifted millions of tons of sand around the Mojave Desert and Jeep engineers added over 40 major advancements to Jeep® Grand Cherokee Limited. While all three events are impressive, you wouldn't notice them all by just looking. With the new 1996 Grand Cherokee Limited, you'll know the second you step inside.

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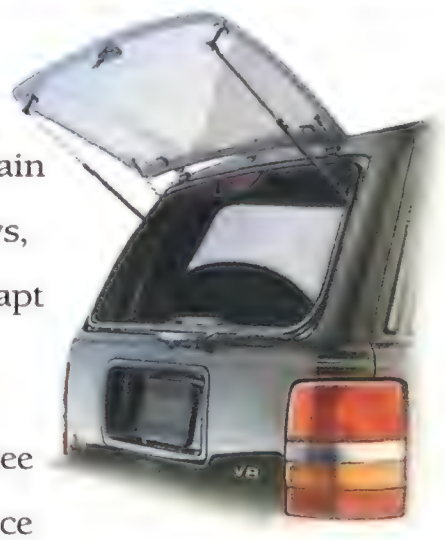

The new Grand Cherokee also offers convenience features like an automatic temperature control system, liftgate flipper glass and a reengineered instrument panel that even includes an auxiliary power outlet for a cellular phone or fax. In addition to available heated front seats, standard heated power outside mirrors are

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THERE'S ONLY ONE

The latest edition of the *Rio Grande Sun* gets the undivided attention of mortgage broker Joe Pringle on a Thursday morning in Española, New Mexico. In cafés all over town, news is a main topic of discussion.

By Richard Conniff

It comes out only once a week, but the *Sun* never sets

Can a weekly paper in rural New Mexico raise enough hell to keep its readers hungry for more, issue after issue? Don't ask

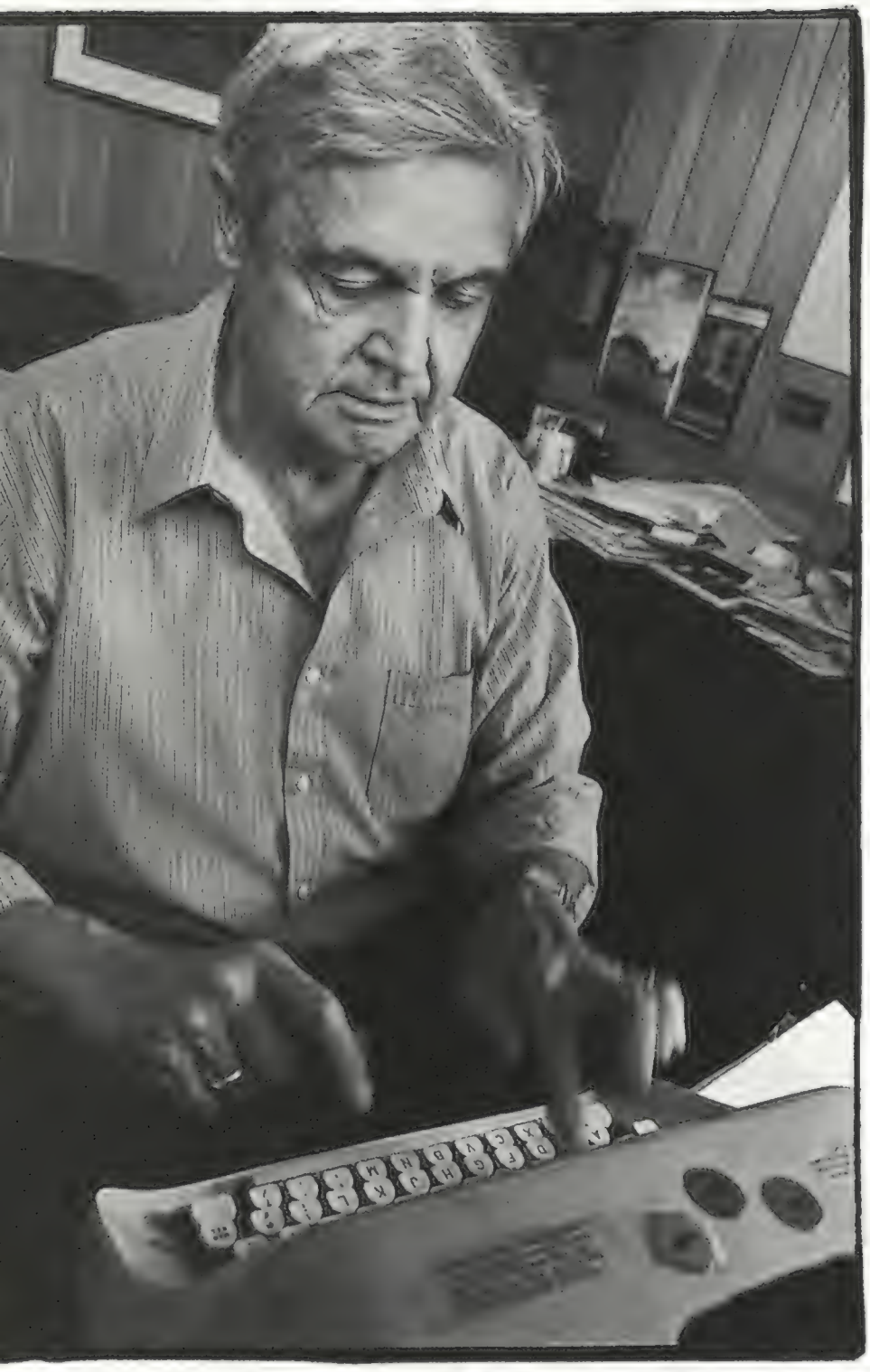
In their heart of hearts, a lot of otherwise sensible people nurture the dream that one of these days they are going to quit the job, sell the house, tell their employer to stuff it and buy themselves a small-town weekly newspaper. In this dream, which Norman Rockwell immortalized in his painting of a country editor, they will perform the crusty independent editor's classic function: "To print the news and raise hell."

At 8:30 on a Thursday morning, Robert Trapp rocks back in the armchair behind his desk in a one-story cinder-block building on a side street in Española, New Mexico. He is a trim, soft-spoken Westerner, rumored to be pushing 70. He has steely gray hair and contour-line wrinkles around the eyes. His sleeves are rolled up and he is relaxed despite the clutter on his desk, where he works as owner and editor of the *Rio Grande Sun.*

This morning, as on every Thursday, his news editor and three reporters have assembled to discuss possible stories for next week's paper: a county official is rumored to be using public employees to dump fill on his private land, and another official has built himself a cor-

Photographs by Will van Overbeek

Writing a story on deadline, reporter Walt Howerton jr. looks stumped as he ponders copy on his monitor.



Sun founder and editor Bob Trapp pounds out a column for the next issue on his trusty manual.

ral out of highway guardrails of uncertain origin. "He has the stoutest corral in Rio Arriba County," the reporter remarks. "You could keep a rhinoceros there."

"Happy Harold's back," says another reporter, referring to a former county treasurer who got in hot water when the *Sun* reported that his office had distributed $680,000 to the wrong agency. The reporter is checking to see who pulled strings to get him a new job on the public payroll.

They are not the sort of stories that win Pulitzer Prizes; merely stories that matter to people who pay taxes in Rio Arriba, a sparsely populated northern New Mexico county the size of Connecticut. Early this year, Trapp announced on the front page: "The *Rio Grande Sun*—All the News About Rio Arriba, and None About O.J."

By the latest count, there are 7,437 weekly newspapers in the United States. Their graphics may be nonexistent, the layouts sloppy and the writing often indifferent, but the weeklies, for better or worse, have character. Their very names constitute a kind of American poetry: the *Half Moon Bay Review and Pescadero* (California) *Pebble*; the *Horton* (Kansas) *Headlight*; the *Snow Hill* (North Carolina) *Standard-Laconic*. There are names that make inquiring minds want to know. For instance, does the *Easy Reader/ Redondo Beach Hometown News* restrict itself to teeny-tiny words? Does the *Epitaph News* of Viola, Wisconsin, consist only of death notices?

Weeklies themselves are thriving. In the past 25 years, circulation has more than doubled, to 57 million na-

Reporter Beth Velasquez interviews grocer Pete Chiello about his impending retirement. Working on a small-town newspaper is challenging, she says, since "you have to face the people you write about."

tionwide. While daily papers flounder in competition with television and other modern diversions, the successful weeklies have carved out a niche. They enjoy special loyalty because they carry the town name on the masthead, pictures of the neighbor's kids on page two and an item in the police blotter about the burglary down the street. Scoffers describe what weeklies print as "refrigerator-door journalism." But it works.

"People can always find time to read their weekly newspaper," says James Squires, a former daily newspaper editor who wrote *Read All About It! The Corporate Takeover of America's Newspapers.* From his point of view, weeklies enjoy an enviable combination of profitability and independence: reader loyalty can make for strong local advertising income. "But their revenues are way below anything corporate America is interested in," says Squires, "and that's a blessing."

As recently as the 1980s, most daily newspapers spent about 15 percent of their revenues gathering news. But corporate takeovers and the pressure for better profit margins have lately caused them to slash newsroom costs to just 8 or 9 percent. The mom-and-pop weeklies meanwhile continue to spend the full 15 percent on news. "They're still doing news, these fellows," says Squires. "They're not in the entertainment business."

Bob Trapp estimates that the *Rio Grande Sun* spends almost 25 percent of its income on news. By 11 A.M. Thursday, this money is allowing a reporter to ask the official for receipts for materials in "the rhino corral." It is enabling a lawyer to pursue a freedom-of-information case against the city police department. It is forcing the head of Española's housing authority to explain just how "Happy Harold" qualified for an "emergency/temporary" job running a $687,000 renovation project. "Other papers say, 'God, you have a lot of news in your community,'" Trapp remarks. "The thing is, we go out after the news. They wait for it to come to them."

Española is an unassuming sprawl of a town with no visible center on the highway between Taos and Santa Fe. The Rio Grande winds through the heart of the county (*río arriba* means "upper river") and dark clumps of juniper dot the eroded desert hills. The afternoon sun picks out low saurian ridges of red rock outside of town, and sinks down till it catches on the snowcapped peaks of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the east and the Jemez Mountains in the west.

Española calls itself "the first capital of the U.S.A." because the Spanish explorer Juan de Oñate set up his headquarters nearby in 1598. The population is now around 10,000 and still largely Hispanic, deeply rooted in old families and neighborhoods. It often seems as if everybody knows everybody else.

Española was much smaller in the 1950s, when the Trapps and another couple decided that it needed a local newspaper. Among others, C. L. Hunter, the local Ford dealer, put up $500 to help get the *Rio Grande Sun* started. This investment has given him little joy. Hunter, who is on the board of directors of a bank and the local

hospital, has deep-set blue eyes and leathery jowls. He is garrulous and blunt. He does his advertising now on radio or in the weekly newspaper in Los Alamos, 25 miles away, not in the *Sun*. "I think the *Sun* is the worst small-town paper that's ever existed," he complains. "We read about every murder, every knifing, everything on the police blotter. I think all that wasted effort could be spent promoting the valley, and we'd be better off."

The first issue, in October 1956, made it clear that the *Rio Grande Sun* would report the news: "National Donut Week, National Smile Week and similar promotional pains will have to shift for themselves," Bob Trapp editorialized. He had been a daily newspaper editor. Ruth Trapp, his wife, had worked as a reporter for a network television commentator in Washington, D.C. They'd always talked about having their own weekly, and Española looked like their big chance.

They spent all their savings and most of their time on the newspaper. Ruth recalls that their babies used to nap on a shelf in the darkroom. The Trapps did not merely report and edit the news but helped set hot type on big, clanking Linotype machines. They operated a turn-of-the-century hand-fed press. "It made a sound like an Olympic case of bronchitis," says Ruth. "*Oooonh*-unh, *oooonh*-unh."

Among other stories, the *Sun* frequently reported on the doings of a charismatic local politician named Emilio Naranjo (below), the longtime Democratic boss of Rio Arriba County. Outsiders sometimes refer to him as "the godfather" or "the Ayatollah of Española." Naranjo, now 78, describes himself merely as a friend of the poor. "What I said was, 'If you need my help, come to me, I'll try to help you. I'll call whoever the hell it takes, even the President of the United States.'" This was not an idle promise. Naranjo was an ally of President Kennedy, who appointed him U.S. Marshal for New Mexico. He also campaigned with Ted Kennedy on behalf of President Clinton.

Naranjo's defenders say he has been the object of hundreds of negative articles in the *Sun*, unfairly "hammering" him for such offenses as hiring cronies and purging dissidents. The *Sun*, they say, used Naranjo to sell papers. To Trapp, on the other hand, the local boss was news, and the *Sun* was merely reporting how Naranjo's machine controlled public employment and spending.

For example, Trapp once discovered that 48 percent of the voters in a local precinct had applied to bring a

In the district office at his modest Española home, State Senator Emilio Naranjo shows a picture of his political idol to compadre Archie Medina. Over the years, Naranjo has taken plenty of heat from the *Sun*.

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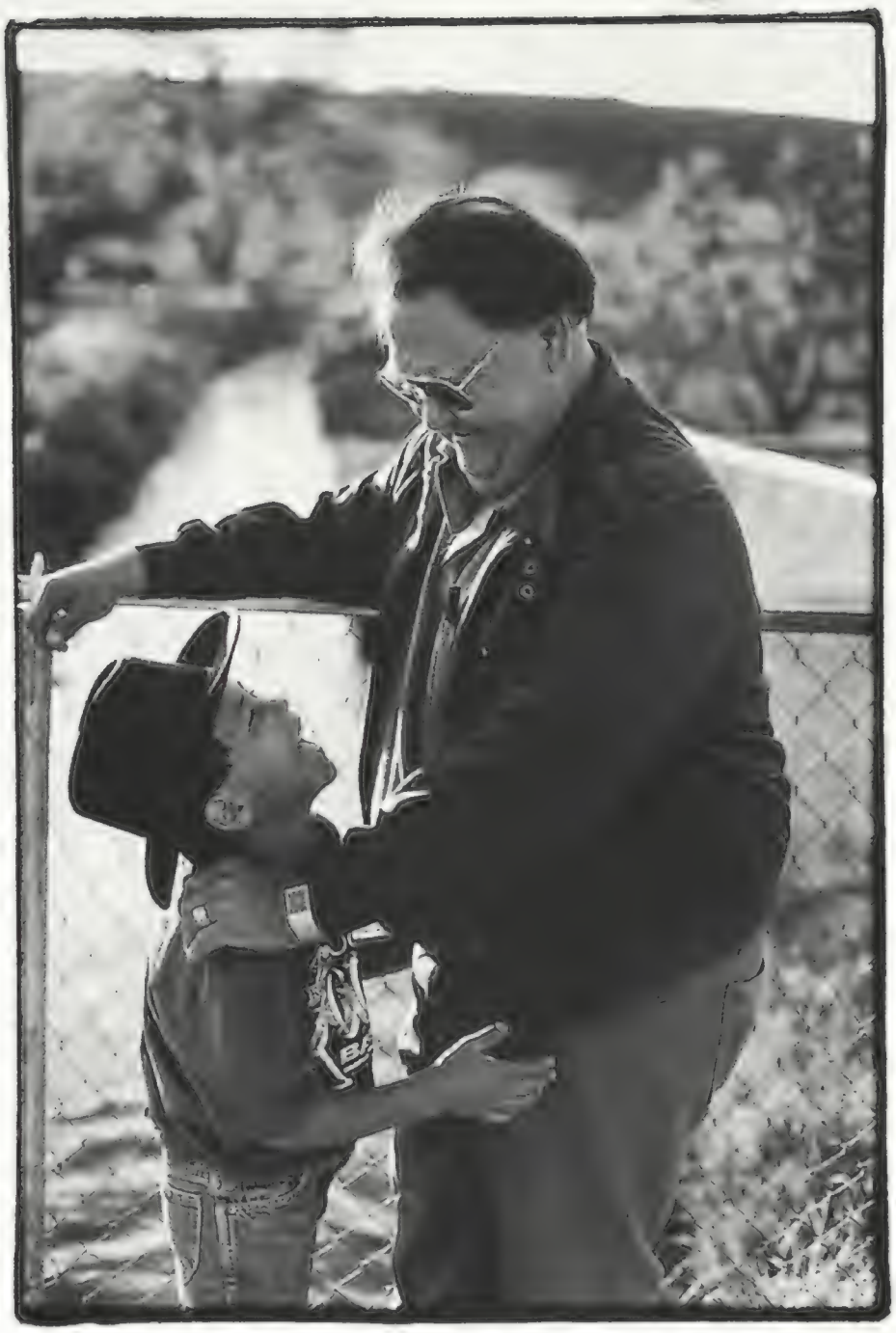
"helper" into the polling booth with them, under a law intended for illiterates. With his characteristic faith in the hidden news value of obscure documents, Trapp worked his way through the requests and found one from the school principal. "That means you can't read or write," Trapp told the principal, who demurred, saying he merely "wanted someone from the party to come and know I was voting right so I could keep my job."

For the *Sun*, such machinations aren't just material for readers to cackle over down at the Rio Grande Cafe but symptoms of deeper problems. In a 1992 article, the paper reported that during his terms as sheriff and county manager, Naranjo had lost the county more than $1.5 million in legal costs, settlements and judgments. Civil suits against him alleged that Naranjo hired known felons as sheriff's deputies, and planted drugs on a political opponent. He was also accused of wrongfully firing government workers because of their political affiliations. In the '70s Naranjo faced criminal charges of perjury and illegal possession of absentee ballots. The latter case was dismissed, and his perjury conviction was reversed due to insufficient testimony and improper procedure. Naranjo, who never lost an election, still serves in the State Senate.

"People got stronger behind me because of the continuous attacks on me in the press," says Naranjo, with his cowboy boots up on an open drawer of his desk in the statehouse. "Instead of harming me, it helped build me up. People were satisfied with me. Only one person was unsatisfied, and that was the editor of the paper."

The first few pages of the *Sun* do, in fact, typically report what looks like bad news, especially to local officials. The letters column, called "Duel in the Sun," also invites controversy, as does Bob Trapp's political column, labeled "Land of Disenchantment." But the *Sun* goes on for 32 pages. Among its many upbeat features, it publishes a column called "Housewife by the Rio Grande." The author, Myrtle White Romero, lives up the Taos Road north of Española. One afternoon not long ago, she was out in her yard waiting for a visitor, sitting erect on a weathered swing under the strands of a newly leafing willow tree. The sunlight sifted through her white hair and through the great black-brown puff of a cat standing on a stump in front of her with its back arched. When her guest arrived, Romero sprang up to meet him. She was born in 1908, but she walked like a 30-year-old. On the way into the house, she pointed out how the thin clouds looked as if they had been raked across the sky with a feather. "Thursday afternoon I write my column," she said. "Everybody knows I write my column on Thursday afternoon. And usually on Thursday morning I say, 'Dear Lord, tell me something to write about.'"

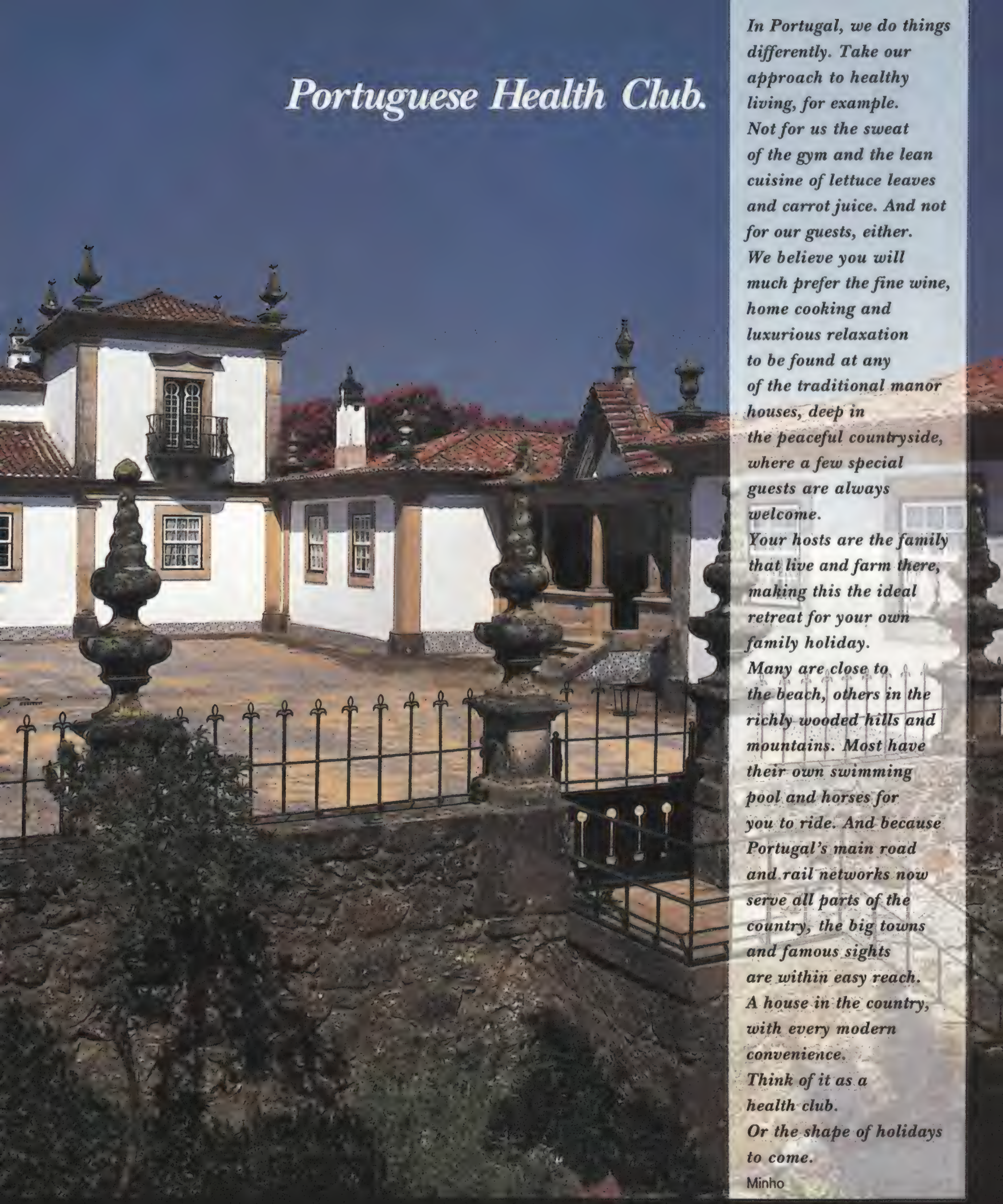


Former county treasurer Harold Romero sr., a frequent *Sun* target, jokes with grandson Harold Romero III.

What she comes up with, the Lord often being distracted by other concerns, is an eclectic and old-fashioned mix of familiar themes: Abraham Lincoln in February, a brief note on the juncos leaving for the mountains in March, the American flag in June. She wrote her first columns at the age of 62, when she quit her job as a hospital technician to take care of her mother and needed something more to occupy her mind. She showed them to Bob Trapp. "He said, 'Can you get me one of these every week? I can't pay you anything, but I can give you a free subscription.'" Then she won a prize for weekly columns in a state contest, and Trapp put her on the payroll at $2.50 a week.

Publishing a weekly newspaper is of course a business, usually with a skinflint at the helm. Trapp once worked at a paper where the editor meted out pencils one at a

Richard Conniff wrote about Frederick Douglass in February and fleas in July. He started his career writing obits for a small-town paper in New Jersey.



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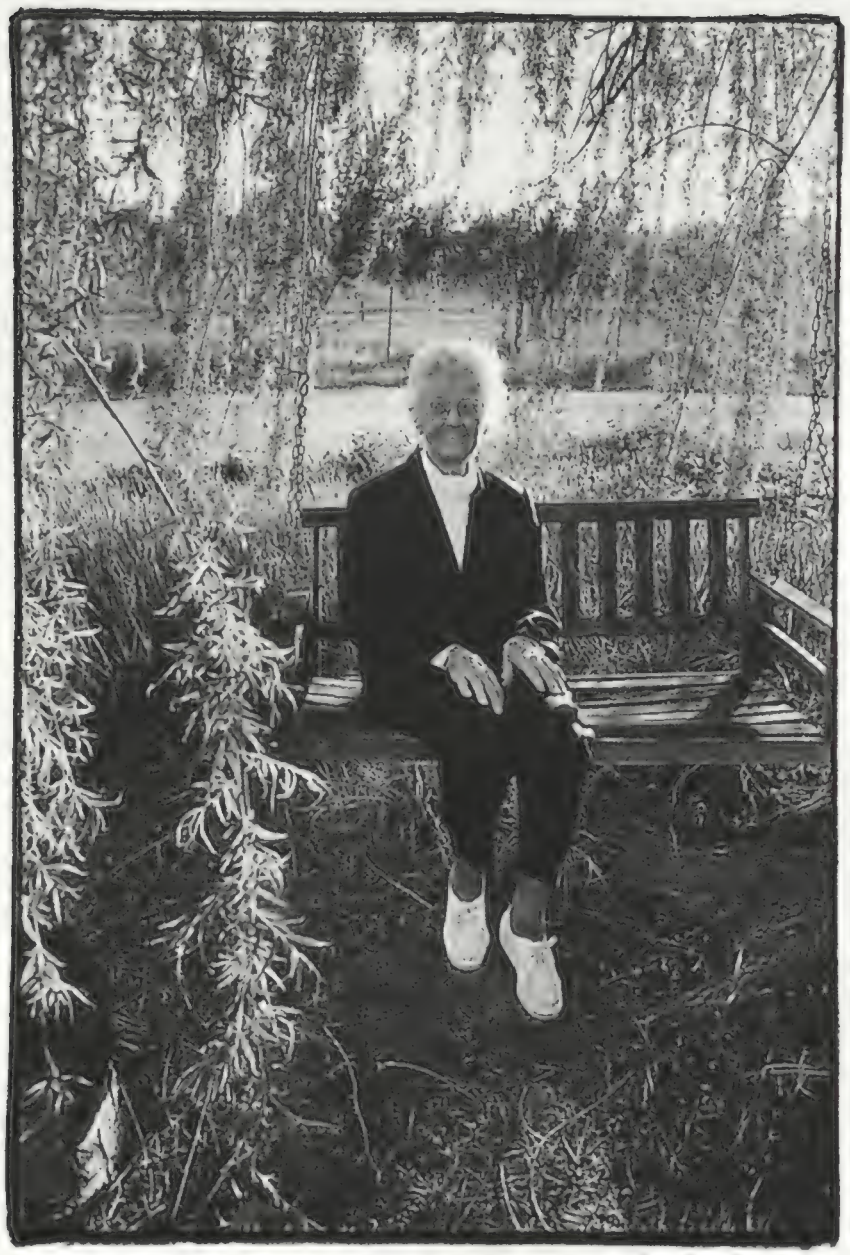


Popular *Sun* columnist Myrtle White Romero enjoys the swing in her front yard, not far from the Rio Grande.

time. "What did you do with the last one I gave you?" he asked one reporter. The reporter walked over to the pencil sharpener, emptied its contents onto the editor's desk and replied, "There it is." By these standards, Bob Trapp is generous.

But his son Braiden, who runs the advertising department, keeps up the hardhearted-newspaper publishing tradition. When one of his two ad sales reps suggests at their Friday meeting that it might help him to have a pager because he spends so much time on the road, Trapp peers at him in disbelief. "A *pager*? *De*-nied."

The other rep wonders how to get a former advertiser back in the paper, and Trapp gently advises her, "You got to go sit on top of her and beat her. I got the impression that she was afraid to make a decision." His goal is 1,500 column-inches of display advertising every week, and he is not above what his father once called "promotional pains." A new clinic has opened in town but has not advertised. "Is it National Heart Month?" he asks. "Is it Respiratory Month? Pull something out of clip art and make up an ad for them. I want their money."

Peddling advertising for the *Sun,* which now sells about 11,000 copies a week, presents peculiar challenges, partly because everybody in a small town knows everybody else's business. Braiden Trapp says he lost one account temporarily because he bought his car from an out-of-town dealer. Advertisers also sometimes pull out because the paper has reported a third cousin's drunk-driving conviction (Braiden points out that the paper also reports when Ruth Trapp gets a speeding ticket) or because of an editorial stand. Not long ago, a local bank that was an important advertiser put up a sign on the road into town to announce community events. In an editorial, Bob Trapp wrote that although this was a nice idea, it was also an eyesore. It took Braiden four months to woo back the bank's advertising. Asked what advertisers like about the paper, he says, "Stories that aren't about them."

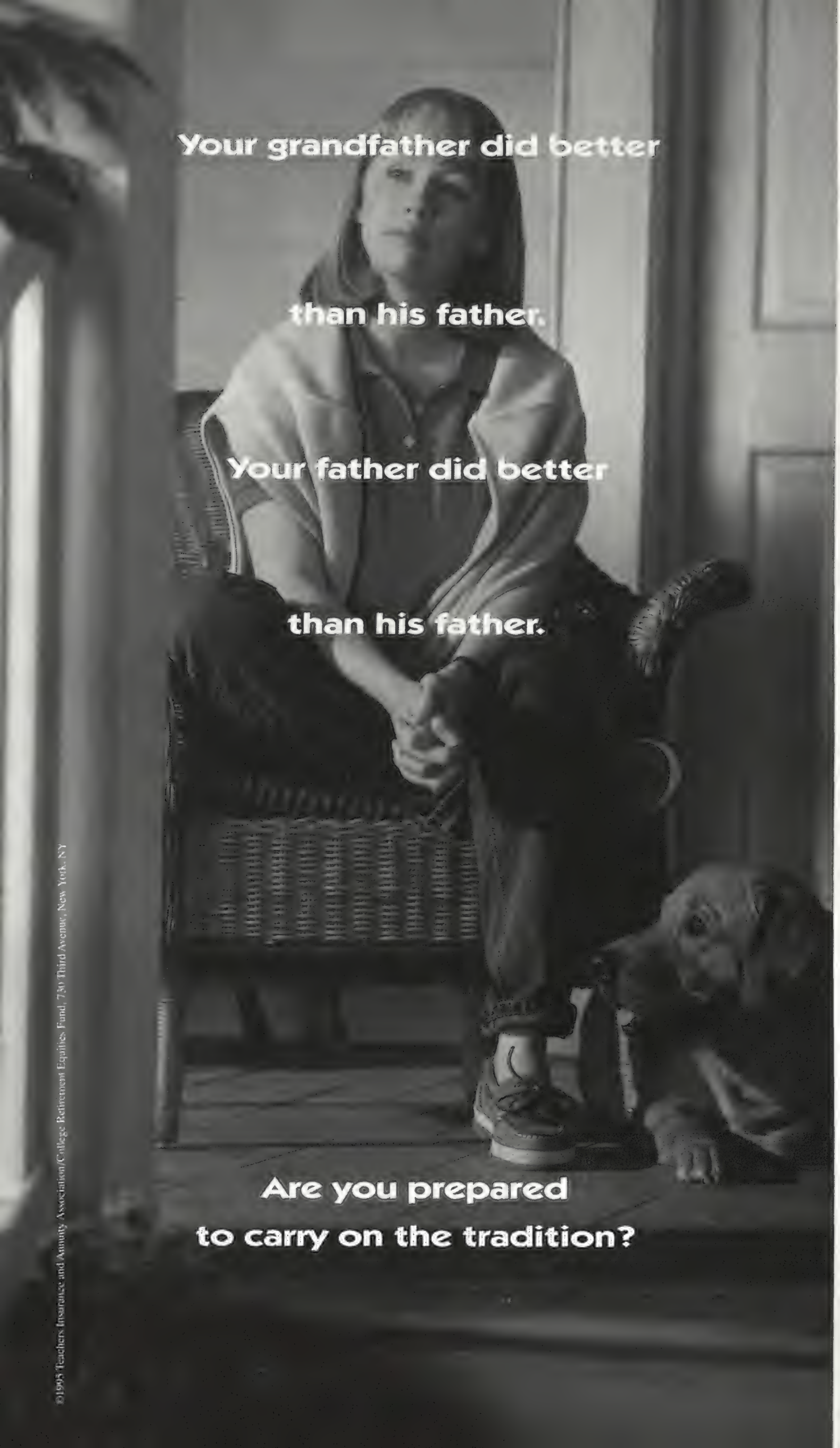
His father says of himself that he has always been "dumb enough or green enough" to think this is the right way to run a newspaper. What he sells advertisers is not favorable coverage but an honest newspaper that readers trust. "I can't do advertising," he admits. "You have to deal with too many different personalities. If they don't want to buy an ad, to hell with them."

"I'll nurse him along—then cut his throat"

By Monday afternoon, the story about an official using county workers to dump fill on his private land has worked out nicely. But the "rhino corral" story is a bust. The county official who built the corral has produced receipts indicating that he got the materials from a company in Albuquerque, not from the local highway department. The reporter, Walt Howerton jr., phones to let him know there will be no story. As they chat, Howerton asks, almost incidentally, if the official picked up the materials himself or had them delivered, and if the Albuquerque company does business with the county. "That's the interesting thing about weeklies," says Howerton, after he hangs up. "It's a slow seduction of your sources. I'm going to nurse him along." He grins. "And then I'm going to cut his throat."

Howerton, who is 50, has written fiction, taught college and worked as an editor at the *St. Paul Pioneer Press.* At the *Sun,* he makes less than half his old salary. He drives a Jeep with a cracked windshield and 164,000 miles on the odometer. But he gets to live in New Mexico and write for a lively newspaper. "I've spent my career at big dailies," Howerton says, "and I haven't had this much fun since I started out in the 1960s."

By and large, a newspaperman's idea of fun has to do with stirring up trouble, and the thing about small-town weeklies, Howerton says, is that people notice. One or two nights a year, someone puts a rock through a front window at the paper. When a sack of dog excrement ap-



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peared at the front door recently, another staffer says, "we took it as an editorial comment."

"You can't hide at all," Howerton says. "You've got to go out and talk to these people after you write about them. That's why so many papers kiss up to the chamber of commerce. They worry too much about their popularity. That's never been an issue at the *Sun*."

All of Monday and Tuesday, news editor Mike Kaemper is locked in front of his Power Macintosh 6100 editing copy, writing headlines and, with a click of the mouse, electronically flowing pictures and text into a six-column dummy layout. He noodles with the headline on a piece about the curious absence of maneuvering for the upcoming Democratic precinct meetings. In recent years, opponents have used these meetings to challenge Emilio Naranjo's permanent status as party chairman for Rio Arriba County. Kaemper wonders out loud if Naranjo is setting things up so he can bow out gracefully. "Who Cares Who's County Dem Chairman?" he writes. But the headline comes up one column short, so he tries again: "Why Is County Precinct Fight So Quiet?" But there isn't any fight. Finally, he writes, "All Is Quiet On The Precinct Front." It's two columns short and not exactly a grabber. He adds the words "So far." His news sense is on target: two weeks later, at a private picnic, Naranjo announces his retirement from the chairmanship he has held since 1953.

"The county clerk hates my guts"

As the weekly deadline draws near, the telephones ring more often and the police scanner stays on, but otherwise the newsroom is oddly quiet. Reporters no longer noisily yank their copy off the platen of a manual typewriter. The air is not blue with cigarette smoke and bad language. The main sound is the fluttering of computer keyboards. "All the noise is internal," says Kaemper. Each reporter does five or six stories a day now, a weekly total of 300 column-inches apiece.

"Is the county clerk good about calling you back?" a reporter asks.

"The county clerk hates my guts; maybe he hates your guts, too," says Beth Velasquez, another reporter. She is 27, still seeking her killer instinct; Kaemper and Howerton are working to harden her. Even if an official won't talk, says Howerton, 17 subordinates in his office will. There is always a way. Once, city officials decreed that they would accept only written questions from reporters. So the *Sun* inundated them with written questions, then published the ones they failed to answer, along with their telephone numbers so voters could call up and ask for themselves. The policy lasted three weeks.

At the moment, Velasquez is getting the sense that Happy Harold is not about to return her call, and Kaemper pushes her to go out and corner him at his new workplace. She finds Harold Romero sr. over at the city housing authority. He is a big, shambling man with his shirt open at the neck and a gold necklace. "You guys won't let me rest," he complains. Velasquez asks him about the rumors that his hiring was a political favor. "I don't think so." He laughs easily and winks to let everyone in on the joke. "What do you mean, 'I don't think so?'" she asks. Afterward, Romero remarks, "I've had a real nice life. The only ones who've been giving me a hard time are at the *Rio Grande Sun*." The reporters, he says, are "a bunch of drifters. They're not from here. They don't know what Emilio Naranjo stands for, or what I stand for. They just come here and grab trash."

By 9:02 Wednesday morning, Kaemper has put the stories about Happy Harold, the dumping of fill on private land and the lingering mess in the county treasurer's office on page one. He prints out the final layout. Braiden Trapp pastes it onto the page proofs, which Bob Trapp packs up in a box and hands off to Ruth, who carries it out the door, bound for the printer's shop in Albuquerque, two hours south.

Later, Bob Trapp follows her. They return at midafternoon with the entire print run loaded into a pickup and a Ford Bronco. Street vendors of all ages line up at the back door, eager to get their papers. By 4:30, the vendors are out on every intersection in town, and cars are backed up, buying two or three copies at a time.

One copy finds its way to the desk of the county official who used public workers and equipment to dump fill in a hole on his private land. He scans the front page with his cheek resting glumly on one fist. The article begins with his side of the story: "I donated a hole to the county [for the fill]." But the headline says "A Hole Lot of Excuses." He ventures a morose chuckle. "Oh," he says, "they stuck it up my [expletive deleted], right?" He wonders out loud if he will lose his job. He will at least lose some sleep.

Bob Trapp says this is all a weekly newspaper editor could ever want. He is the last person to leave the *Sun* on Wednesday night, when the silver moon has risen high over the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. And he is the first person back on Thursday morning. A weekly newspaper's job, he says, is to make local officials think twice before undertaking some dubious new enterprise. The job, he says, is to make them hesitate just long enough for this thought to cross their minds: "What if somebody gets hold of this over at the *Sun*?"

At 8:30, his reporters gather in his office to discuss the prospects for reporting the news and raising hell in next week's paper.

At a busy intersection in Española, Severito Garcia hawks copies of the *Sun*, hot off the press, to motorists.

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Chapter One

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*Cargo space measured with seats upright. †All comparisons and figures represent 1995 model year vehicles, except for the 1996 Subaru Legacy Outback. Ground clearance based on manufacturer's published specs.

itself. After all, how many vehicles have more cargo space than an Isuzu Rodeo, more headroom than a Jeep Cherokee, ground clearance like a Ford Explorer,† plus the riding comfort and fuel economy of a passenger car? Indeed, the world's first sport-utility wagon would make quite a prize. But our immediate concern was escape. We found our way onto a winding mountain road, our pursuers still just a stone's throw behind. We soon met with a particularly tight turn, which tested the limits of our stability. But thanks to our Outback's lower center of gravity, we handled the nuisance with nary a problem. Our rivals, following in their Chevy Blazer, fared less well with that tricky roadway, and their exact fate on that day remains a mystery. So we drove on, feeling safe for the moment, but keenly aware that other adventures might await us down the road. If you'd like to join in our exploits, just visit your Subaru dealer for a test-drive, or call 1-800-WANT-AWD.*

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By Kenneth Turan

A film buff cheers the oldies, calling for Silents, please!

Garbo, Chaplin, Keaton—yesteryear's screen giants—dazzle audiences anew at Pordenone, the world's most prestigious silent-film festival

Silent films have magic. They've outwitted history. After a simple beginning 100 years ago, when Auguste and Louis Lumière rented a café in Paris and began projecting their films to the public, movies without sound became, for a brief moment, the most potent of entertainment mediums. With only a simple change of subtitles and the appropriate music, films like *The Gold Rush, The Sheik* and *Flesh and the Devil* could be understood across the globe, and the stars they created—Chaplin, Valentino, Garbo—became icons so celebrated internationally they had no need of first names.

But though these films were simply "the movies" until sound came in, the spoken word (in the person of Al Jolson and his ad-libbed "You ain't heard nothin' yet!" in 1927's *The Jazz Singer*) did arrive with a vengeance. Suddenly, for the first time, silent films were perceived as lacking something, and were forced to endure a cultural firestorm of numbing proportions. The very prints themselves were regularly destroyed, and even the estimated 20 percent of the films made between 1895 and the late 1920s that managed to survive this physical purge were treated with disdain, and sliced and diced to feed television's hungry maw.

Television is where I first experienced the silent medium, watching abbreviated versions on a series called *Silents, Please.* It was not until years later, encouraged by film historian Kevin Brownlow's celebrated dictum about continuity ("You cannot enjoy the last reel unless you know what happened in the first") that I began to recognize the appeal of this neglected form.

The appreciation of silents began for me with the realization that the absence of spoken dialogue is not a handicap to endure but a virtue to enjoy. For the hidden, unexpected pleasure of these films is the way the combination of image, music and free-ranging personal imagination seduces us into becoming fully interactive partners in the movie experience.

Take the famous scene in 1925's *The Phantom of the Opera* in which Mary Philbin's mischievous "Christine" reaches around and removes the mask covering the face of Lon Chaney's "Phantom." By virtue of a clever camera angle we the audience see the Phantom's horrific visage before Christine does, in dreamy repose for an instant and then, unforgettably, in agony as the creature realizes that his dreams of acceptance and love are over. It is a moment of supreme emotion, one of the greatest the silent world has to offer, and since no speech is heard, nothing distracts or distances us from directly experiencing its shock. Because we are on our own, without words to guide or to straitjacket us, we are, in effect, meeting the scene halfway, filling it up with our own strong feelings.

Long considered dead and buried despite these virtues, silent film is going through an unexpected revival that is showcasing its accomplishments to a new generation. Recently, in only one week in Los Angeles, I had a choice of four silent programs, ranging from the familiar *Gold Rush* to the rarely seen Danish *Atlantis*, all complete with live musical accompaniment. And that music is much different from the tinkling piano of the silents-on-TV years. Modern orchestras have found the accompanying of silent films to be among their most popular activities: when the National Symphony Orchestra played for *Nosferatu,* 5,649 tickets were sold; 6,404 people paid to hear the Indianapolis Symphony do *The Phantom of the Opera.*

In addition, new musical groups have been formed specifically to accompany silents. When I heard the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Alloy Orchestra play their rich score for the German *Sylvester* at the Telluride Film Festival in Colorado, their dynamism galvanized an overflow audience into cheers. And this is not a phenomenon limited to festivals (see page 110) or major cities. According to the "'Live' Cinema Calendar," a monthly compilation of silents performed with music, screenings take place in such non-metropolitan sites as Coos Bay, Oregon, and Bar Mills, Maine.

For those living outside the wide range of "live" shows, there has been an eruption of silent film on video and cable, where the new Turner Classic Movies

Uttering nary a syllable, sultry temptress Greta Garbo seduced John Gilbert in 1927's *Flesh and the Devil.*

Livio Jacob and Piera Patat, two founders of Pordenone, are encircled by newsreels at their archive in Gemona.

With his stony face and acrobatic skills, Buster Keaton, here in *The Cameraman* (1928), didn't need a voice.

channel has instituted a "Silent Sunday Night" feature. The Library of Congress has combined with the Smithsonian to produce "The Origins of American Film," a six-cassette series that contains rare early films, and companies like Kino On Video and Milestone Film & Video have dozens of silents available, everything from the antics of Buster Keaton to the beautifully photographed, little-seen *Last of the Mohicans* from 1920.

One critical element in this rebirth of silent films has been an annual event held not in New York, Los Angeles or London but, rather, in a little-known Italian provincial capital of 50,000, a city with no previous connection to silent films, located an hour northeast of Venice at the foot of the Alps.

Every October for the past 13 years, "Le Giornate del Cinema Muto," literally "The Days of Silent Film," has taken place in the prosperous but nontourist town of Pordenone in the Friuli region, a combination of event and locale so unexpected that it's been likened to "having a festival on Amish quilting in Oklahoma." So different from other film annuals that it doesn't even want to be called a festival, "Pordenone" has become the nonpareil event of the silent-film year, eight days of enthusiastic viewing from 9 A.M. to well after midnight. People I'd met who had sampled Pordenone were so passionate about the experience that a pilgrimage there seemed essential if I was to understand why vintage silent films are on the cutting edge once more.

With all its screenings held at the creaky but endearing Teatro Verdi, a 1,200-seat cinema dating from the 1950s, replete with glass bricks and heavy curves, Pordenone elicits gasps of astonishment from the hundreds of participants who gather from around the world. As surprising as the festival's success is the unlikely reason for its existence, an earthquake that devastated the entire Friuli region in 1976 and practically leveled Gemona, hometown of husband-and-wife film buffs Livio Jacob (now Pordenone's chairman) and Piera Patat (above).

As students in Trieste, Jacob and Patat had their interest in movies intensified by membership in a film society through which they met the late Angelo R. Humouda, a legendary film archivist who used to travel throughout Italy in a Volkswagen bus jammed with silent films, early cartoons and a projector, exhibiting his treasures to audiences that wouldn't ordinarily be exposed to them.

Strong regional partisans (Patat likes to wear a "Friulani Are Fabulous" button), the couple wanted to do something for their area, perhaps raise money to help rebuild Gemona's destroyed movie theaters. They consulted with Humouda, who volunteered to bring his traveling silents to Gemona, which he did in 1977. And he offered the young enthusiasts some priceless advice.

Los Angeles Times *film critic Kenneth Turan attends lots of festivals, but Pordenone is his favorite.*

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Cowboy king Tom Mix was one of the silent stars who crossed over into talkies, making 300-plus movies.

Charlie Chaplin's pantomime portrayals of life at its comic-tragic best-worst include *The Gold Rush* (1925).

"He told us, 'With the little money you can raise, you won't ever be able to rebuild a theater, but you can buy films,'" Patat remembers. "He introduced us to a world completely new to us, the world of American 16-millimeter-film distributors."

The couple began buying films, eventually founding an archive in Gemona. They became friendly with Paolo Cherchi Usai, a colleague of Humouda's, and with members of a film society that had a theater in nearby Pordenone, where, in 1982, the group decided to put on a retrospective of the French silent-film comic Max Linder. Though the gathering didn't even have a name, and any thoughts of making it an annual event would have seemed preposterous, this was the first Pordenone festival. There were only eight registered guests.

Napoleon *conquers Manhattan*

While the Pordenone committee was feeling its way, great changes were taking place in the silent-film world. The most important was the international acclaim that greeted the 1980-81 screenings of Kevin Brownlow's ten-years-in-the-making reconstruction of Abel Gance's monumental *Napoleon*, accompanied by a specially written score. The ten days of sold-out performances at Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall set off a cultural frenzy as people who'd barely heard of silent films fought to get in. Attending a *Napoleon* screening and riding the huge wave of audience emotion when the multi-hour film reached its climax—the image expanded across three screens as Bonaparte's army marched into Italy—remain among my most intense moviegoing memories.

Though Brownlow maintains that *Napoleon* wasn't shown under ideal conditions in the United States, its popular success demonstrated the unlimited potential for silent films. Newly knowledgeable fans searched out the best silent prints available (especially important because the photographic quality of the originals is starkly superior to the grainy copies we often see today) and insisted on improved conditions for viewing. This meant paying attention to two factors—projection speed and musical accompaniment—whose neglect had contributed to the dwindling popularity of silents among modern film aficionados.

While there is a uniform sound-projection speed of 24 frames per second, nothing of the kind exists for silent films, largely because they were shot by cinematographers who hand-cranked their cameras. They speeded up or slowed down the movement from film to film, or even within a single film, from 16 to 20-odd frames per second as the action dictated.

Making things even more complicated, footage was often supposed to be projected faster than it had been shot to ensure that stunts looked crisper and slapstick funnier. Standard speeds also varied over the decades:

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projecting D. W. Griffith's 1916 epic *Intolerance* at 24 frames per second, instead of the intended 16 to 18, makes it play like comedy, while showing F. W. Murnau's 1927 romance *Sunrise* at 16 frames per second, instead of the intended 24, has the unfortunate effect of putting audiences to sleep. Though today's silent-film projectionists generally don't change the tempo within a film, they must know what the standard frames-per-second count was in each film they show and be able to work with modern variable-speed projectors. The aim remains what it was in 1911, when a projectionist described the ideal practitioner as someone who "renders a film, if he is a real operator, exactly as does the musician render a piece of music, in that, within limits, the action of a scene being portrayed depends entirely on his judgment."

As to music, it was much more central than modern audiences realize, accounting for nearly half of a film's impact. The most prestigious films had specially composed music (Saint-Saëns wrote an early score) played by musicians with impressive credentials. According to one count, there were as many as 500 orchestras working the biggest American theaters, ranging in size from 26 to 90 players and coping with music of such complexity that the original score for Griffith's *Way Down East* contained 242 tempo changes. But no theater, no matter how humble, ever considered showing a film without at least a smooth piano player or organist who, if there was not a full score or musical guidelines to work with, would be expected to improvise from what was on the screen.

"Most silent films were 80 percent emotional and 20 percent intellectual. That's not meant as a slap, it's the way they were constructed," says William K. Everson, a dean of silent-film historians. "The score minimized flaws, added punctuation and feeling, stretched the emotionalism and guided the audience into the right frame of mind. It's a major crime, absolutely deadly, to show these films without the proper accompaniment."

Lost and found—in a pool, a tavern, a barrel

The rediscovery and reconstruction of *Napoleon* not only showed the current commercial potential of correctly presented silent movies but also symbolized the most surprising aspect of the art's revival. Pictures thought to be lost forever—key works unseen for decades, written off as victims of nitrate film stock's physical disintegration—began turning up on a regular basis, uncovered in places ranging from an abandoned swimming pool in the Yukon to the basement of a Danish tavern where Peter the Great once spent the night.

One of the great Japanese silents, Teinosuke Kinugasa's 1926 *A Page of Madness*, the hallucinatory tale of an old man who works at an asylum in the hope of freeing his wife who is confined there, was found in a rice barrel in the garden of Kinugasa's country house. *The Last of the Duanes*, a celebrated Tom Mix Western, was discovered under layers of bird excrement on the floor of a chicken-farm building in a remote Czech village. And the actor James Mason came across many of Buster Keaton's personal 35-millimeter prints lying neglected in the garage of the comedian's former home.

But other discoveries, paradoxically, began to come out of places that didn't know the significance of what they had. Those were the state-run archives in countries like Australia and Czechoslovakia that had been terminal points in studio distribution systems so lackadaisical about what was shipped out that no one thought it worth the return postage to have anything sent back.

While these archives have prints in huge numbers (the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia recently repatriated more than 1,600 American-made films), they have lacked not only the money and manpower to examine their holdings but also the incentive. With all the ingredients for a silent-film revival in place, from the continual rediscovery of important films to an understanding of how to present them, what was most needed was a spot to bring it all together, which is where Pordenone came in.

Mary Pickford said "it would have been more logical" if silents had evolved from talkies, not vice versa.

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An American sampler of festivals where silent films will be shown in 1996

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Cinecon, The Society for Cinephiles (Hollywood)
Write: Cinecon 31, P.O. Box 1632, Hollywood, CA 90028

Cinefest (Syracuse, New York)
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Mary Philbin's mute dismay at a grotesque Lon Chaney speaks volumes in 1925's *The Phantom of the Opera.*

"I swear we had no idea it would ever be like this," says a harried Paolo Cherchi Usai, who is curator of the Motion Picture Department at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, as well as a cofounder and codirector of Pordenone. "The first festival was a group of friends, not even a convention in the American sense. But the speed with which people came was amazing, as if they were waiting for this to happen. It was the right thing at the right time—and in the right place. This wouldn't have become what it has in a big city like Paris—it would have disappeared, absorbed into a hundred other things."

What Pordenone did from the start was display the field's best work to those who could best appreciate it, an essential task because, preservationists being human, there is not much incentive to do a great job of restoration if there is nowhere to take a bow. But ever since "we put the spotlight on," explains Usai, "if it makes a splash in Pordenone, it will make a splash everywhere." So now collectors and archivists worldwide find themselves thinking, What can we dig up? What can we do for Pordenone this year?

As a result, there is scarcely an archive or private collector that refuses to contribute prints; more than 40 sources were credited in last October's program. This leads to both an unmatched completeness in the festival's retrospectives and the periodic appearance of one-of-a-kind rarities. And, says Usai, because Pordenone "refuses to obey the logic of the masterpiece," the festival also delights in showing "bad films that have slept on the shelves for 80 years, that no one dared to touch." There is even a time when unknown films are screened for audience identification: one year Italian director Sergio Leone literally leapt out of his seat at the shock of recognizing an early film starring his father.

Essential to Pordenone's success is its most intangible quality: an unpretentious warmth. The festival retains a charming Mickey-and-Judy-putting-on-a-show energy, and it has enough respect for life's non-cinematic pleasures to build in the kind of two-hour breaks for lunch and dinner that visitors to Italy appreciate. Above all, Pordenone is in love with the purity of what is on the screen. There is no "A" list, no glitz, no glamour. As a festivalgoer said to me, "All the stars belonging to this world are dead."

Pordenone is also the only place where all branches of the often fractious silent-film community declare a truce and fraternize with the enemy. For as arcane as it is, the silent-film world is as rife with turf wars as any inner-city neighborhood. Collectors scorn archivists as

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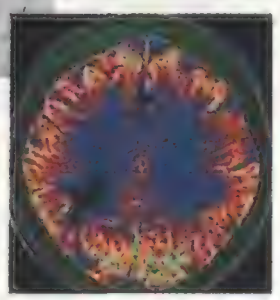
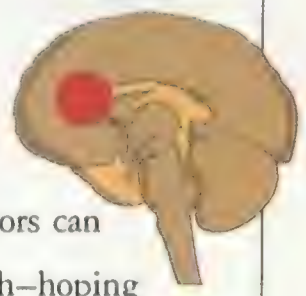
New medicines currently being tested may be able to stop destruction of brain cells in the crucial hours after a stroke.

Scientists from pharmaceutical research companies discover more than 9 out of 10 new drugs.

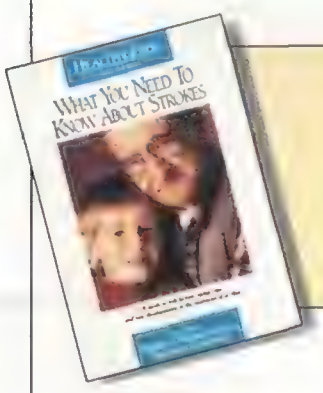


When a person suffers a stroke, reduced blood flow damages part of the brain. Then a powerful chain of chemical reactions occurs. Called the *glutamate cascade*, it rains terrible destruction down on brain cells in the initial days after a stroke, causing further damage. As glutamate levels build, excess calcium and a toxic form of oxygen destroy brain cells. Today, doctors can only stand by and watch–hoping that the cascade will end before massive damage occurs. But there is hope. Pharmaceutical company researchers are currently developing 19 new drugs that could help reduce the terrible damage to the brain that occurs after a stroke.



prevention

Anyone can have a stroke. But age, gender, race and medical history play a role. Some people also experience the following warning signs: temporary weakness or numbness on one side of the body, blurry or dim vision in one eye, a sudden, severe headache, or speech difficulty. Seek immediate medical help if you have any of these symptoms. Fortunately, there are things that you can do to reduce your risk of a stroke: Quit smoking • Exercise regularly • Maintain a low cholesterol diet • Limit alcohol.



For a free copy of "What You Need To Know About Strokes," please call us toll-free: 1-800-862-5110 or visit us on the Internet: http://www.phrma.org

America's Pharmaceutical Research Companies

New music was written for the Pordenone screening of *Lonesome* (1928), with Glenn Tryon and Barbara Kent.

unduly cautious and conservative; archivists return the favor by looking down on private enthusiasts as little more than freebooters who don't take proper care of their holdings. Even academics and archivists have their differences, the former angry at not being able to get the access they want, the latter upset because use inevitably damages their prints.

Because what archivists and collectors bring to Pordenone is the newly found and unexpected, the festival has a reputation for canon-busting, for shaking up ideas of what is significant and why. The prime example is its 1989 exploration of pre-revolutionary Russian cinema, specifically the films of director Evgenii Bauer. Surprisingly sophisticated works not seen outside their country of origin since 1917 and thought destroyed, Bauer's productions took the festival by storm. They are characterized by a subtle, Chekovian sense of character, and the dramatic use of light and shadow. Their rediscovery underscores why one film historian, with understandable drama (this is the movies, after all), saluted Pordenone as the place that "takes the chains off the film bibles throughout the world."

Last fall's festival was bookended by a pair of special screenings with musical scores commissioned for the occasion. Opening night was *Lonesome*, a naturalistic silent from 1928, directed by Paul Fejós and accompanied by the Alloy Orchestra, the crowd-pleasers from Telluride. It's a Manhattan love story about a man and a woman, played by Glenn Tryon and Barbara Kent (left), who find each other during a raucous day at Coney Island, and it had me sighing as the stars went up and down on a real—as well as an emotional—roller coaster. Closing night struck quite a different note. *The Unknown*, directed by Tod Browning in 1927, starred Lon Chaney as a circus performer who pretends to be armless, and Joan Crawford as the ingenue who likes him that way. This silent was so unnerving that even John Cale, who wrote and performed the ultramodern electronic score, was moved to call it "a fairly sick film, for want of a better word."

From toothless soothsayers to death by elephant

The festival's biggest aural surprise was the intoxicating Indian music—vocals, percussion and harmonium improvised on the spot—for silents that had never before left the subcontinent. The best of the Indian films was a stunning print of the 1928 *Shiraz*, an Oriental fantasy about the building of the Taj Mahal that featured everything from toothless soothsayers to execution by elephant's foot. The other main series presented Hollywood work never before gathered with such thoroughness—for example, the silent Westerns of William Wyler—accompanied by two indefatigable piano players who relieved each other at two-hour intervals.

I looked forward most to the sophisticated features from the unaccountably forgotten director Monta Bell (p. 114), who combined a sardonic sense of humor with emotional subtlety and poignance. A devastating moment from his *Lady of the Night* had a hard-boiled Norma Shearer getting out of prison and casually checking her makeup in the shiny body of a passing hearse. It wasn't the only time I marveled at Bell's audacity.

At the other end of the spectrum was the slapstick gang, more than a hundred comic shorts from obscure performers, drawn together under the rubric "Forgotten Laughter: Unknown American Comedians." The favorite among these was the Jewish comic Max Davidson, whose elaborate shrugs of resignation at increasingly ridiculous situations had audiences saluting him as Woody Allen's cinematic grandfather. His *Pass the Gravy* was voted the most popular comedy short.

Though I'd wondered before Pordenone whether I'd been oversold on it, seeing the silents scrupulously presented confirmed for me what the medium's partisans have always maintained. As historian William Everson insists, "This was not a shoddy little flickering art medium, not the primitive forerunner of anything. This deserves to be seen as a completely separate art, something unique and full-blown."

Nothing made that point to me as strongly as the

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screening of *Lonesome*, shown in a version to which brief talking sequences had been added once sound became all the rage. The voices of the two stars were perfectly adequate, but how could those mundane tones compare with what I thought they sounded like when it had all been left to my imagination? The emotions that the silent sequences evoked were shattered when the actors could actually be heard. While sound particularizes, silence universalizes, allowing me to share completely in the on-screen dream without ever leaving my seat. For the first time I understood silent star Mary Pickford's famous statement that "it would have been more logical if silent pictures had grown out of the talkie instead of the other way around."

If there is a downside to the story of Pordenone it is that, like Italy itself, the festival always seems to be on the brink of falling victim to economic and logistical pressures. Though its $400,000 cost is tiny (about as much, it has been said, as a single morning at the Venice Film Festival), Pordenone has been more appreciated internationally than at home and never quite knows how or if it is going to cover its expenses. Proximity to Bosnia and the U.S. Air Force base at Aviano has made it difficult for participants to get hotel rooms. And the quasi-crumbling Teatro Verdi is always in danger of being closed for renovations that could take years—and take the heart out of the proceedings.

But Pordenone is not about to give up: it means too much to its participants. One film historian told of a colleague who insisted on coming though he was close to death: "It was extraordinary, that visit, as if he just wanted to see Mecca before he died." It is no wonder, then, that Paolo Cherchi Usai, speaking passionately for the entire committee, says, "It's a moral commitment, not a job."

Director Monta Bell towers over a set of *The Bellamy Trial* (1929) as a crewman with tape (right) checks the distance from the camera to the actress; "set musicians" (foreground) play mood music for the silent-film cast.

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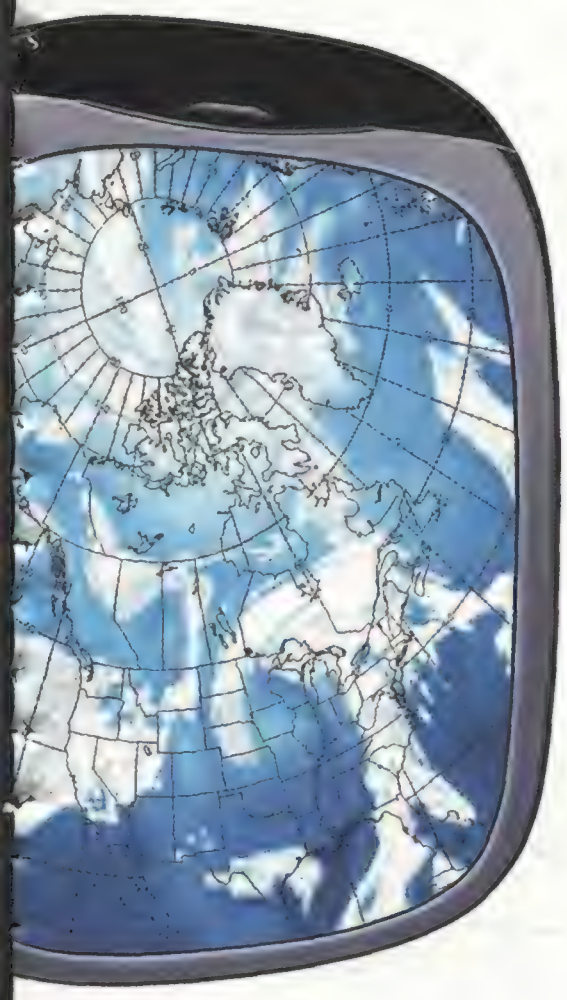

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Winslow Homer, the quintessential American artist

He would chronicle it all—the Civil War, the schoolyard games, the raging coast of Maine—yet the man remained a mystery to the end

By Ken Chowder

Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Something must have happened to Winslow Homer around the end of the 1870s. In his mid-40s, he was already a successful painter—eventually, he would be widely regarded as the greatest American artist of the 19th century. The early Homer welcomed critics into his Manhattan studio. He had an active social life; one young woman, who often saw him at picnics, said that "he liked to be in the thick of things." He conducted "the usual number of love affairs," as a friend said. Homer was a bit of a dandy: he wore loud checks and bowler hats and sported a huge handlebar mustache. He was affable and funny; another friend wrote, "I have enjoyed Homer's visit exceedingly. . . . I have not laughed so much since I left home."

It was in 1879 that reporters began to notice something different about Winslow Homer. The first thing they remarked was a certain need for privacy. "Of Mr. Winslow Homer's movements . . . no person however intimate is ever supposed to have the secret," one magazine wrote. The next year, Homer began to be impolite, even brusque; he was particularly hostile, some said, toward women. "He affects eccentricities of manner that border upon gross rudeness," a reporter wrote. A few years earlier, when he spent a summer in Gloucester, Massachusetts, he'd lived right in the center of town; in 1880 he stayed at the lighthouse in the middle of Gloucester Harbor instead, rowing into town only when he needed supplies.

The next year he left for England; he stayed in an isolated fishing village on the ocean, in complete seclusion, for nearly two years. When he came back to America, he settled down outside the tiny town of Prout's Neck, Maine, on a rocky peninsula surrounded by the stormy sea. He would live there for 27 years—the rest of his life—unmarried, with no more of "the usual" love affairs. His two-room cottage, a converted stable, was heated by a single stove ("Mop frozen stiff in other room," he wrote one January); he indulged in neither telephone nor horse-drawn carriage. In the winter there were no neighbors at all, and this suited him. "I like my home more than ever as people thin out," he wrote. The later Homer discouraged visitors and was disinclined even to hear from the outside world: "I am four miles from telegram & P.O. & under a snow bank most of the time, so I cannot answer telegrams." His hermit's manners toward strangers ensured solitude. To dishearten lady visitors, he posted a sign on the path to his studio: "SNAKES! MICE!"

"I don't want a lot of people nosing around my studio and bothering me," he wrote. "I don't want to see them at all." Winslow Homer had withdrawn. We don't really know why he withdrew; Homer didn't want us to know. Late in life he was approached by an art critic who wanted to write Homer's biography. "It would probably kill me to have such a thing appear," Homer wrote back. "As the most interesting part of my life is of no concern to the public I must decline." Even now, no one is certain what this "most interesting part of his life" really was, but we can guess.

And we can see for certain how his paintings, like his *Returning Fishing Boats* (1883); Homer is "both the historian and poet of the sea . . ." wrote one critic.

life itself, went through a drastic transformation. A new Homer retrospective opens at the National Gallery of Art (sponsored by GTE Corporation) on October 15, continuing until January 28, 1996; the exhibition then moves to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (February 21 to May 26, 1996) and to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (June 20 to September 22, 1996). Despite Winslow Homer's own injunction—"Don't let the public poke its nose into my picture"—the exhibition, with the accompanying catalog published by the National Gallery of Art, will clearly show the evolution of a great painter's work: from a vision of a sunny, cheerful America to a lonely universe of elemental conflict, isolation, danger and death.

Winslow Homer was a Yankee. He was born in Boston in February 1836. His mother was a painter, a talented amateur who did pretty watercolors of flowers. His father, a well-to-do hardware merchant, jumped into the California gold rush of 1849; Charles Homer loaded a ship with mining machinery, packed his shining brass-bound trunks, and came back two years later with . . . a small parcel fastened only with string. With the family fortune gone, Winslow, at 19, became apprenticed to a lithographer. He designed cover illustrations for popular songs—songs like "Oh Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad." He hated it. "From the time I took my nose off that lithographic stone, I have had no master; and never shall have any," he later said. When his apprenticeship was over, he became a freelance illustrator, and his first published drawing appeared when he was 21, in a magazine called *Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion.*

The fierce independence that marked Homer's character is evident in Napoleon Sarony's portrait of him, c. 1880.

The Civil War made Winslow Homer famous. *Harper's Weekly* sent him to draw the war in 1861, and he followed McClellan in Virginia. He returned to the war at least once, observing Grant's successful, if bloody, Peninsular Campaign in 1862. In the meantime, he began to paint. Winslow Homer, as much as any artist, can be said to be self-taught: he took a grand total of four lessons in oil painting, but even his first works show a surprising mastery. Homer himself was not so surprised. As an apprentice, looking at a gallery, he'd announced to friends his intention to paint. What kind of work would he do? "Something like that," Homer said, indicating the pictures in the window, "only a damned sight better." He was quite right; his professional debut as a painter, in 1863, was a complete success. Though he would often receive scathing reviews (it took years for sales to make him financially secure) there was never any doubt that Winslow Homer was an important artist.

The first paintings are all nominally pictures of war. But Homer seldom showed men actually fighting. Instead, his Civil War images were of life in camp, at the edge of war—soldiers smoking and whittling, eating pie, foraging for food, feigning illness, watching the campfire, sleeping in the sun or listening to a military band play "Home, Sweet Home." His soldiers show boredom and sadness more than courage or fear. Homer repudiated the usual heroic battle scenes in favor of small moments, carefully and truly rendered. Death, for the time being, is still offstage.

Homer didn't paint his best-known Civil War picture until the war was over. *Prisoners from the Front* (p. 122) shows a Union officer (Gen. Francis Barlow) reviewing a group of Confederate prisoners. From the moment the picture was exhibited in 1866, it has been seen as a summary of the entire war. A cool, steady, rigid Yankee faces three Southerners: a slouching and seemingly ignorant boy, a bewildered old man whose past has been defeated by the present, and a defiant, romantic officer with flowing hair. The painting is little more than a lineup of men standing on a wasteland of destroyed tree

Ken Chowder has scripted a documentary by Florentine Films, The People's Plague*, which will air on PBS this month. He wrote on Stephen Crane in January 1995.*

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WE ARE DRIVING EXCITEMENT.

The Carnival, painted in 1877, is one of a series in which Homer documented the lives of the newly freed blacks in Petersburg, Virginia. Strips of cloth on the Harlequin costume derive from African ceremonial dress.

Metropolitan Museum of Art

stumps, but Homer's broad historical vision is clear: making no judgments, he contrasts two ways of life.

The painting was an immediate sensation. Homer would paint for 43 more years, but *Prisoners from the Front* was always, in his day, considered his greatest painting. It was mentioned so frequently—often to disparage later work—that Homer eventually remarked, "I'm sick of hearing about that picture."

Just after the war, Homer painted *The Veteran in a New Field.* The image is simple: a man stands in a sunny field, scything tall wheat, his back to us. The veteran has dropped his uniform coat and canteen, abandoning his military role to return to a harvest of plenty. The "new field" the veteran has taken up is the business of peace. But the simple picture can be read in another way. The scythe is a potent symbol: the veteran, once a killer, is the Grim Reaper, Death himself. As Bret Harte had written in 1861, "Death shall reap the braver harvest!" The painting, then, is an elegy for the dead. The war is over, but its legacy remains—the presence of absence. This, Homer seems to say, is what we have harvested.

In December 1866 Homer traveled to Europe and spent some ten months in Paris. He enjoyed the night life hugely, but he was not greatly influenced by the work he saw in France. He was never, in fact, greatly influenced by anyone else's work. Even as a young apprentice, he'd formulated a declaration of independence: "If a man wants to be an artist," Winslow Homer pronounced, "he should never look at pictures."

So Homer's paintings from the late 1860s and '70s are not particularly European. In fact, these works, taken together, form a meticulous picture of America—almost a social history of the nation. The early Homer was a thoroughly democratic artist. He captured the flavor of American life by painting ordinary people at familiar moments. His was a sun-blessed, congenial America. Most often, he painted subjects frequently ignored by his peers—children and women and African-Americans.

His children were almost always of the country variety. Homer lived in New York City, but he usually painted rural, outdoor scenes, as if this America, away from the cities, was the real one. Perhaps he shared the national longing for the age of innocence, before blood was shed in the Civil War, when America was still sweetly rural,

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THOSE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPONSIBLY.

Three Southern prisoners are brought up before a Northern officer in *Prisoners from the Front* (1866), hailed by the New York *Evening Post* as a complete "summation of the most vital facts of the Civil War."

untainted by industrialization and urbanization. The string of barefoot boys playing snap the whip (opposite) outside the red country schoolhouse in Homer's painting from 1872 could, like many of his pictures, have been an illustration for Mark Twain's nostalgic *Tom Sawyer*, written only a few years later.

Inside that schoolhouse there was a new institution: the woman teacher. When the men went off to fight the Civil War, women captured the American classroom and never gave it back. Teaching was just one of the new pursuits for women. Homer's women worked in factories, rode (if sidesaddle) through high mountains and even showed their knees as they wrung out bathing costumes on the beach. It isn't always easy to see emancipation in activities that now seem staid, but even an occupation like croquet reflected a new kind of woman. Croquet was a game that women, despite their gentility and cumbersome hoop skirts, could play against men—and sometimes win. In the *Croquet Scene* of 1866, the female players are monumentally large, and their outfits blaze with color; the one faceless man in a black jacket is on his knees before these new emblems of womanhood. In *The Dinner Horn*, painted in 1870, a young woman with one sturdy arm on her hip literally sounds the trumpet—the trumpet, perhaps, of change.

The growing independence of women was one of America's accomplishments featured in Homer's paintings. The newly acquired position of blacks was another. Throughout his career, Homer used African-Americans as subjects; in fact, the *New York Times* reported in 1880 that no other American painter, white or black, painted black people so often. On a few early occasions, Homer did resort to the condescending caricature that prevailed at the time, depicting blacks as banjo-strumming, minstrel-show figures. But far more often, he portrayed them with sympathy and emotional depth. *The Carnival (Dressing for the Carnival)*, from 1877, is a masterpiece of color, character and social history. It depicts a moment when two black women are dressing a pensive black man in a bright Harlequin's outfit for the end-of-year celebration called Jonkonnu. Small children, two of them holding American flags, watch in the sunshine. But the celebration, like the man's face, is not a very joyful one. The national election of 1876 had signaled the end of Reconstruction. Even as Homer painted, the Southern black was facing the slide back to conditions much like slavery. In the carnival of Jonkonnu, the black man will be permitted to ascend to the big house and

Snap the Whip (1872) captures the jubilation of boys just freed from the confines of the schoolhouse (background). With nine main figures, the canvas is one of Homer's most ambitious early compositions.

beg his old masters for coins: he is a sad clown. The gate leading to the mansion has again been shut. But, as Peter Wood and Karen Dalton write in *Winslow Homer's Images of Blacks*, the artist has "chosen to locate himself and the viewer on the black side of the fence."

The early Homer painted a broad picture of American society. No one knows what changed his attitude toward people and his vision of the world. Nicolai Cikovsky, cocurator of the exhibition with Franklin Kelly, attributes the change, in part, to a growing distaste for American values in a time of political corruption and venal money-lust. But there are other guesses to be made. It seems clear that the later Winslow Homer, the painter of elemental struggle between Man and Nature, was born of some mysterious pain. Several scholars have pointed out that one woman in particular, a young woman with reddish hair, appears frequently in the watercolors beginning in 1875—then disappears forever in 1879, the year Homer's behavior changed. In the new exhibition, this woman is a petulant schoolteacher in *Blackboard*, lies in the grass reading in *The New Novel* and is the figure in *Woman Peeling a Lemon*. "In later years," writes Lloyd Goodrich, the first notable Homer scholar, "there was one painting that he always kept on an easel in his studio"—a small image of the woman. According to family legend, this was the love of his life.

She disappeared from his paintings; he spent the summer of 1880 in the lighthouse; and then in 1881 he left for the bleak fishing village of Cullercoats in the north of England. There he found the subject that would occupy him for the rest of his life: the raging sea. In England he painted monumental women by a sunless ocean—powerful women carrying baskets of mussels, mending their nets, watching ships in distress. The heroic quality that Homer removed from the Civil War shows up in these fishwives. But women, who had been so admired and so prominent, would gradually disappear from his work. The situation of men in peril on the sea would not. There had been some kind of shipwreck in Winslow Homer's life.

What happens after a shipwreck? With luck, rescue. Homer returned to America; in 1883, he moved to Prout's Neck, where his brothers each had a house. The next year he took over his brother Charles' stable and had it moved to the edge of the sea; he added a covered porch so he could sit outside and watch the ocean. That same year he finished his large and dramatic oil *The Life Line* (pp. 128-29). As Homer went on, he often deleted

Overleaf: *West Point, Prout's Neck* portrayed the scene at "15 minutes after sunset—not one minute before."

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

Dark forms of half-starved crows loom above a fleeing fox in one of Homer's most dramatic and tragic works, *Fox Hunt*, from 1893. With the advantage of numbers, the crows could vanquish the prey, its escape slowed by the deep snow of Maine.

details to heighten the essential meaning. In this painting, we see the edge of a ship to the left and some small figures on a cliff to the right; but most of the canvas is taken up by two figures dangling over the mountainous waves. A half-conscious woman is being rescued by a seaman with the aid of ropes and a pulley. The woman's sexuality was apparent even in 1884: "She is a buxom lassie . . ." the *New York Times* wrote. "She has nothing on but her shoes, stockings, and dress." Critic Jules Prown later wrote, "Homer seems to indulge in a schoolboy's fantasy [of] heroism, damsel-saving, and sex." The seaman's face is hidden by the woman's wind-whipped red scarf, but "it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that if we were to unveil the face . . . we would find Winslow Homer."

If Homer is the seaman, who is the fair damsel he is rescuing? The unnamed woman from the late '70s, perhaps. Or maybe, as art historian Henry Adams has suggested, the picture represents Homer's wish to save his beloved mother from death: its creation coincided with her final illness, and she died soon after it was finished. In either case, the image brings to mind lines by James Tate: "For the first time, the only / thing you are likely to break / is everything, because / it is a dangerous / venture. Danger invites / rescue—I call it loving." *

In *The Life Line*, nature has begun to take on an ominous, threatening quality. In the 1880s Homer's women could be rescued, but in the later pictures, death at the hands of an indifferent universe is inevitable. *The Signal of Distress* shows the progression. In its original state, the painting depicted a heroic rescue—the small boat in the distance, although signaling for help, was under full sail. But Homer altered the boat. He dismasted it, removed the sails, and there is now no sign of life; the boat is adrift in a cruel sea. Attempts at rescue will be futile.

If Homer's art up to 1879 forms a social history of America, his late work is almost the opposite: it is a highly personal vision of the eternal human predicament, of the pathetic vulnerability of all life in the face of death. In most of Homer's great works after his crisis, death is an immense presence; men and wild animals see it, fear it, struggle with it, and then, at times, accept it. The acceptance of death is the link between Homer's two best-known paintings, *The Gulf Stream* and *Fox Hunt*. *The Gulf Stream*, his most melodramatic and lurid painting, was begun in the months after his father's death in 1898. There is no doubt about what's happening in the picture: a single black man on a dismasted boat faces death in several forms—hunger, thirst, circling sharks, waves and even a waterspout. In the distance, a ship passes by under full sail, oblivious, as the Gulf Stream carries the man farther out to sea. Still, the victim has a certain listless dignity in the face of all this disaster. He does not seem to ask for an end to his isolation; he does not seem to ask to live.

Perhaps it was the mystery of the black man's indifference that caused the painting to go unsold for seven years. Perhaps, too, this is what prompted a request for a "full description"—which Homer answered with an acid irony: "I regret very much that I have painted a picture that requires any description. . . . You can tell these ladies that the unfortunate negro who is now so dazed & parboiled will be rescued & returned to his friends and home, & ever after live happily."

Homer began as a figure painter; humans were at the center of his art, and the setting was secondary. But gradually the setting—the natural world—became more and more dominant. In the late work, the human figure is at the mercy of nature, beneath it, overpowered by it.

* "Rescue" from *The Lost Pilot* by James Tate. ©1978 by James Tate. First published by the Ecco Press in 1978.

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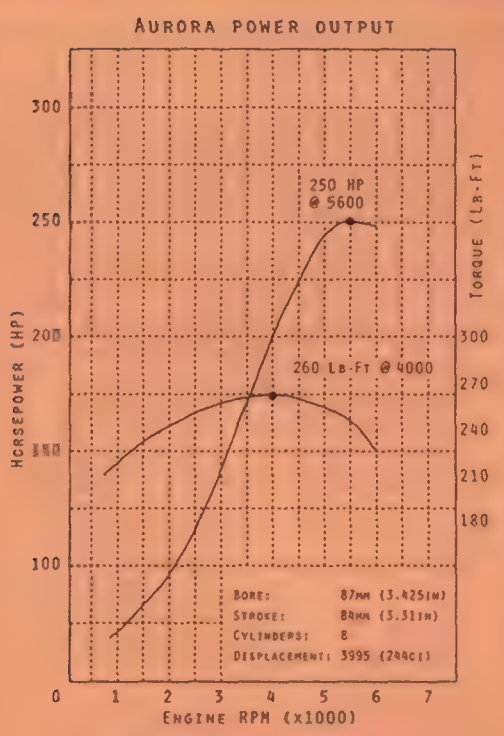

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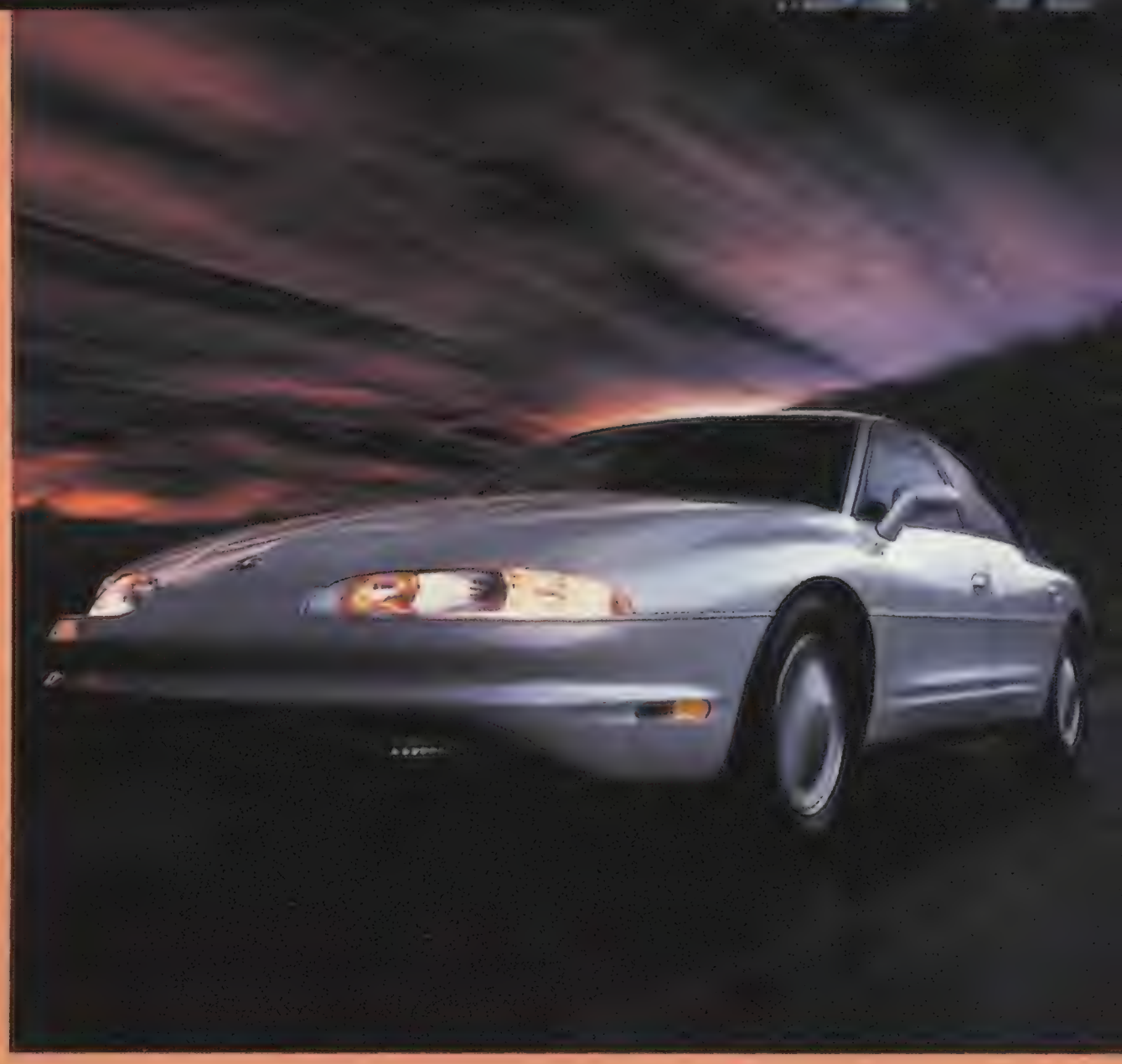

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The masterpiece called *Fox Hunt* (1893), his largest painting, has no humans in it at all. But the situation, again, is one of danger and death: a flock of starving crows attacks a bright red fox that is caught in deep snow. The fox—usually a predator itself—is the "point of view character": the crows hovering overhead seem terrifying, like winged death. But the fox, like the black man in *The Gulf Stream*, is not regarding the source of danger; instead, its head is turned toward the quiet sea, lit in the distance by a winter sun—as if looking beyond its own death.

By the end of his career, Homer had boiled things down to their most basic elements. In 1890 he began what was, in narrative terms, his simplest work: he began to paint seascapes, many with no figures—no humans, no animals. Just the sea and the earth; the elemental battle of waves against rock, over and over. But it isn't true that these pictures are a world without people. One person, of course, is there: Winslow Homer. The painter is finally alone with the sea.

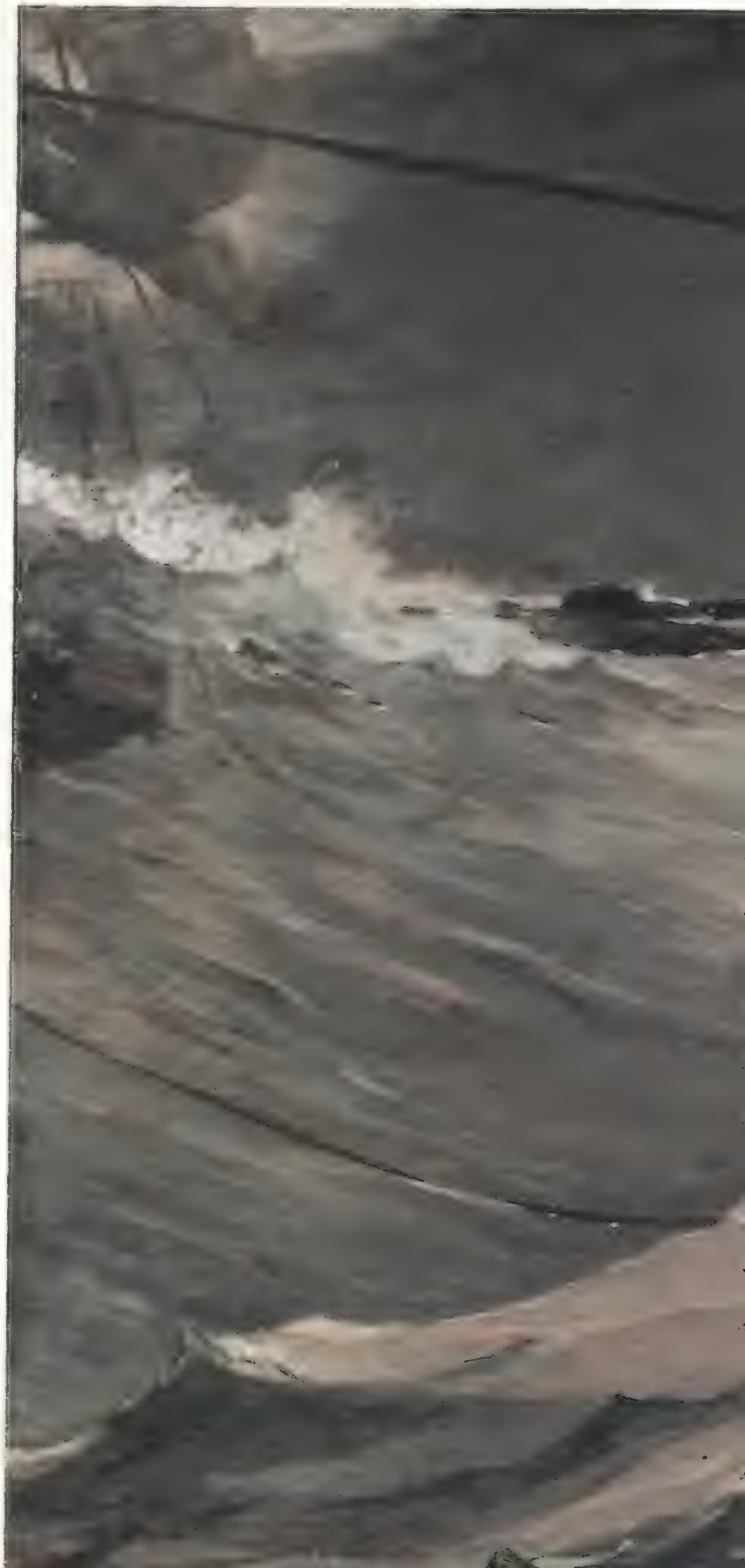
In his last years, he became the Winslow Homer of popular legend: the gruff old man by the sea, "an aloof, silent, all but misanthropic figure locked away in the stony fastness of Prout's Neck," as art historian Marc Simpson puts it. Homer was pleased when he could report on wintry difficulties ("Great storm last night. Cold as the d——"). He had a portable studio built, a little house on runners, so he could get close to the sea—and be protected from human intrusion.

But Winslow Homer was not so much of a curmudgeon as he seems. He respected and loved his brothers, and was generous to family and neighbors (an ill nephew received a check from Homer with the gruff note: "No thanks for this"). For all his crankiness to strangers, and the isolation that is apparent in his paintings, he was not unhappy. "My home here is *very pleasant, I do not wish a better place,*" he wrote. And again: "The life that I have chosen gives me my full hours of enjoyment for the balance of my life. The Sun will not rise, or set, without my notice, and thanks."

It seems strange. To avoid human contact, to repress love and yet to be thankful for life. But perhaps it is this riddle that makes Homer a great painter. His works are not simply forbidding; they are luminous as well. One of his last paintings, *Right and Left*, expresses the duality perfectly. Two golden-eye ducks fly over the ocean waves. A man in a distant boat fires a shotgun at them—in fact, the radiant orange blast of the gun is aimed directly at the viewer. One of the ducks is rising, the other falling. The picture is about the moment of death. Or is it? Golden-eyes, as Homer knew, typically dart downward when threatened. Death is close, but escape is possible. We are in the moment between life and death. This, Winslow Homer seems to be saying, is how life always is.

As he was working on *Right and Left*, he wrote his brother: "I am so very thankful for all '*His mercies,*' that I now write to you. There is certainly some strange power that has some overlook on me & directing my life. That I am in the right place at present there is no doubt about. . . ." A month later, the crusty old hermit was even more sanguine about life: "All is lovely," he wrote, "outside my house & inside of my house & myself." On September 29, 1910, at 74 years of age, Winslow Homer died in his small house in Prout's Neck, in the simple universe he'd found at the edge of the sea.

Philadelphia Museum of Art



In late works such as *Right and Left* (left) from 1909, and *The Life Line* (below) from 1884, Homer explored the issues of destiny and mortality. The ducks are caught at the moment of their being hit by a blast from a shotgun; the life of the unconscious woman literally hangs in the balance.

National Gallery of Art

By Enrique Fernandez

A year-end night of magic in this Cuban hill town

Was Zulueta a place of memory or of myth? When a journalist returns to his ancestral home to find out, the fireworks cast a spell

I first returned to Cuba, my home country, as a journalist in the 1980s. Driving the full length of the island, from Santiago de Cuba to Havana, on one of these visits, I saw a sign pointing north that said "Zulueta." I wavered, then drove on to Havana, catching a plane back to my home in the United States. Somehow, I sensed that although Zulueta was a town of no more than 11,000 people, it loomed too large in my consciousness to include it as one more stop on my journey. "I dream about Zulueta every night," my father had told me years before. And he would often start an anecdote with the words, "*En mi pueblo* (In my hometown)," or, simply, "*En Zulueta.*"

My family moved to the United States when I was 13, and like most Cuban-Americans, they never went back. Raised in Havana, I had been a city boy, used to apartment buildings, buses, trolleys and the general bustle of the metropolis. But at least once a year, we piled into the car and drove to Zulueta, where there were far more horses than cars, where the houses had wooden portals in front and mango and avocado trees out back, and where the men were mustachioed peasants who wore wide-brimmed straw hats and riding boots, and had sharp machetes slung from their waists. I played with my country cousins on the porch of my great-aunt's spacious house and watched the horsemen leave their

Throughout the week leading up to December 31, the people of Zulueta warm up with spontaneous fireworks.

Photographs by Claudio Edinger

mounts tied outside my great-uncle's country store next door, to step in for a drink of rum.

Now, finally, I am returning to my father's dreamscape. I have chosen the end of the year, the time when, traditionally, Zulueta's errant children return for the *parrandas*, or parties, wild year-end revels that are exactly one century old. Visiting Zulueta will also afford me a chance to see what I like to think of as the real Cuba, the backwater Cuba, the Cuba that is not the subject of constant journalistic exposure and political analysis. Mostly, though, I want to see for myself if the town's romance is overblown by nostalgia—my father's and my own. I want to walk into the storybook and either feel its pages crumble when reality hits or get lost between its covers.

I remember the parrandas well from my childhood. Celebrating the New Year, the townsfolk divide into two historic camps, vying against each other to see who can produce the best parade float and the most spectacular fireworks for New Year's Eve. Excitement builds during the preceding week, as each neighborhood stages impromptu parades and minor displays of fireworks, all to the accompaniment of beating drums, singing and dancing. Dawn on December 31 is ushered in with a conga line that weaves through town; later in the day, final touches are put on the floats, and the fireworks are set up. Come nightfall, the wild heart of the parrandas is unleashed, as the two neighborhoods take turns parading their floats—immense, fanciful contraptions meant to go only up and down the main drag—and setting off massive fireworks displays. From then on, all through the night, there will be more fireworks: no one sleeps and the rum flows. In the morning, the winning neighborhood dances through the streets again in a triumphal march.

Arriving in Zulueta one night in late December, I head for the house belonging to Mercedes Garit, the sister-in-law of a friend of my family's, who has kindly agreed to put me up. Located on Parque Armona, the town's main square, her home is a perfect spot to catch the festivities. As soon as I have unpacked, Mercedes' 13-year-old daughter, Yesi, and her friends escort me around the town. The preparations for the parrandas are feverishly going on; we poke into warehouses and homes where floats are being built, costumes are being sewn, and fireworks have been stored.

Considering that the Cuban economy is in the worst slump of its history, it's a miracle that something as festive and impractical as the parrandas is going on. By my calculation, the hundred-year mark of the celebration means that the annual festival has survived the Spanish colonization, a shaky republic, two right-wing dictators and 35 years of Communism.

For most of the 19th century, there had been only farmland in this rich, hilly agricultural area. Then in 1873 Julian Zulueta, one of Cuba's biggest sugar barons, began to lay a railroad line to service one of his sugar mills. When a station was built, some of the people who lived in the adjacent hamlet of Guanijibes (an old Indian name) moved uphill to live there. Since then, the town, which would be named after the wealthy landowner, has been divided into two bands: the original *guanijiberos*, and the people of La Loma, the railroad station up the hill.

Miami-based writer Enrique Fernandez is at work on two books about Latino culture in the United States. They will be published by Ballantine Books.

In Zulueta, which prospered around the turn of the century as a railroad stop for the Cuban sugar trade, nearly everyone is a "cousin." Amid signs of better times, such as the ornate swinging doors (above, center), life in the town is low-key, except around New Year's.

With 12 sugar mills in the area, the town of Zulueta grew and prospered. By 1894 it had a mayor, a school, a social center, a public cemetery and a baseball club. That year, the parrandas began.

Zulueta prospered until early in this century, when the Carretera Central, a two-lane highway that ran the full length of the island, bypassed the town. Isolation set in, turning the town into a microeconomy with limited opportunities for its native children, such as my grandfather, a small entrepreneur who was forced to migrate to Havana in the 1940s. Isolation meant that the same families would often intermarry, so that by the time of my childhood everyone there was my "cousin." And isolation also shaped Zulueta into a magical, eccentric world.

In the late '50s, when Fidel Castro's revolution against strongman Fulgencio Batista was raging, some *zulueteños* joined in the struggle—a couple of my own relatives took to the nearby mountains and became guerrilla fighters. Today, the townspeople are divided on the question of loyalty to the Castro regime, but by and large there is skepticism and disappointment, as in the rest of the island, with the regime's inability to deliver economic stability and growth.

Still, during the parrandas, politics takes a backseat, and even though the celebration date coincides with the anniversary of the Cuban Revolution—on January 1,

1959, Batista fled Cuba and the revolutionaries took over—it is scarcely mentioned. In this town around New Year's, whose side you are on has little to do with ideology and everything to do with whether your heart belongs to La Loma or to Guanijibes.

For nothing, it seems, can stop the zulueteños' passion for partying, pyrotechnics and friendly, if intense, competition between the uphill and downhill neighborhoods. Indeed, as I tour the town with Yesi and her friends, fierce-looking men block my way when I try to cross into either of the competing sides—only to allow me in and invite me to join them in a drink after I explain that I'm an impartial journalist.

Later that evening, my teenage guides and I walk back to Parque Armona, in the center of the La Loma neighborhood. Like any typical, small-town Latin American plaza, it is ringed by important buildings, such as the church, the movie theater, the police headquarters, the home of the town's most distinguished citizen—a doctor—and the assembly hall where, in my father's time, Zulueta's "society" events were held. After describing some of my family's houses to my young friends and being told they are around the corner from the church, I set out on my own, telling them, "I'm off in search of my childhood."

Back then, my family would stay with my grandmother's sister, América, who had married a prosperous merchant and lived in a spacious house next to my great-uncle's store. Under the starlight, I recognize the store. The house next to it looks somewhat rundown, but I figure this must be it. When I knock, a sliver of an old man answers, and I tell him I'm looking for Rosa, América's daughter. "We knew a grandson of Concha [my paternal grandmother] was coming to write a story," says an old woman I instantly recognize, although the last time we met she could not have been more than 30. "I knew it had to be you."

Long before dawn on December 31, a conga line kicks off the day of revelry; later, cars like this old Chevy wagon (below) arrive laden with passengers, as flags of the competing sides are waved to cheers and boos.

The house has weathered inside as well as outside, quite different from the days when my great-aunt América kept it shining and full of the porcelain figurines both she and my grandmother loved. But its spaces are still big and noble, and its ceiling, like those of other old Zulueta houses, is incredibly high. "Enriquito, don't you know who I am?" a voice behind me asks, using the diminutive of my childhood. I turn to see a stocky man about my age in jeans and a baseball cap. "It's me, Julito."

Julio, Rosa's son and my playmate during my Zulueta sojourns, is now a sugar mill technician during the sugar season and a soccer trainer the rest of the year. Later, we're joined by another cousin, "Tin Tin," who arrives from the provincial capital of Santa Clara, where he lives today. Tin Tin is really named Jose Agustin, after his grandfather, but since the latter's nickname was "Tin," the grandson's was doubled; I remember him as a skinny kid always riding a borrowed horse. Neither of them has changed much since we were children, and they become my companions during my days in Zulueta—the country cousins and the city cousin reunited as playmates once more.

The week of festive preparation doesn't prepare me for the hectic sweep of events when the parrandas finally hit. Well before dawn on the morning of New Year's Eve, I am awakened by the conga line snaking through town to officially start the festivities. Led by musicians playing conga drums and cowbells, it stops at the houses where homecoming zulueteños are staying, inviting them to join the dance. As I shuffle gracelessly to the drumbeat, trying to wake up and not stumble in the dark, a lithe black man scolds me, "You haven't danced a step. Enjoy yourself, sonny boy. Life is short. Ha!" He's right. Surrounded by hypnotic rhythm and euphoric people, I effortlessly lose myself.

Moving in unison to the rumba beat

After a couple of hours, I hear the beat of the music change to a rumba. The drummers have stopped leading the conga line and are now sitting on a stoop on the town's main street, the Calle Real. Merging with the growing crowd, now moving in unison to the rumba beat, I see the drummers for the first time. They are all black; in Zulueta, as in the rest of Cuba, the African heritage is strong. Excitement mounts as La Loma and Guanijibes rivals set off fireworks and yell out for their neighborhoods: "*Viva La Loma!*" "*Viva Guanijibes!*" Then, huge banners for each neighborhood are waved on the street, each swing of the colors equally met by cheers and shouts of derision.

Suddenly, the La Loma standard-bearer climbs to a second-story rooftop above the drummers, triumphantly waving his neighborhood's red flag. He is a white *guajiro,* as Cuban peasants are called, with a big mustache

Getting costumed to ride on a float, a *guanijibero* stands patiently as gold dust is applied to his body.

Like a dream image, the Guanijibes float moves down the main street of Zulueta on New Year's Eve.

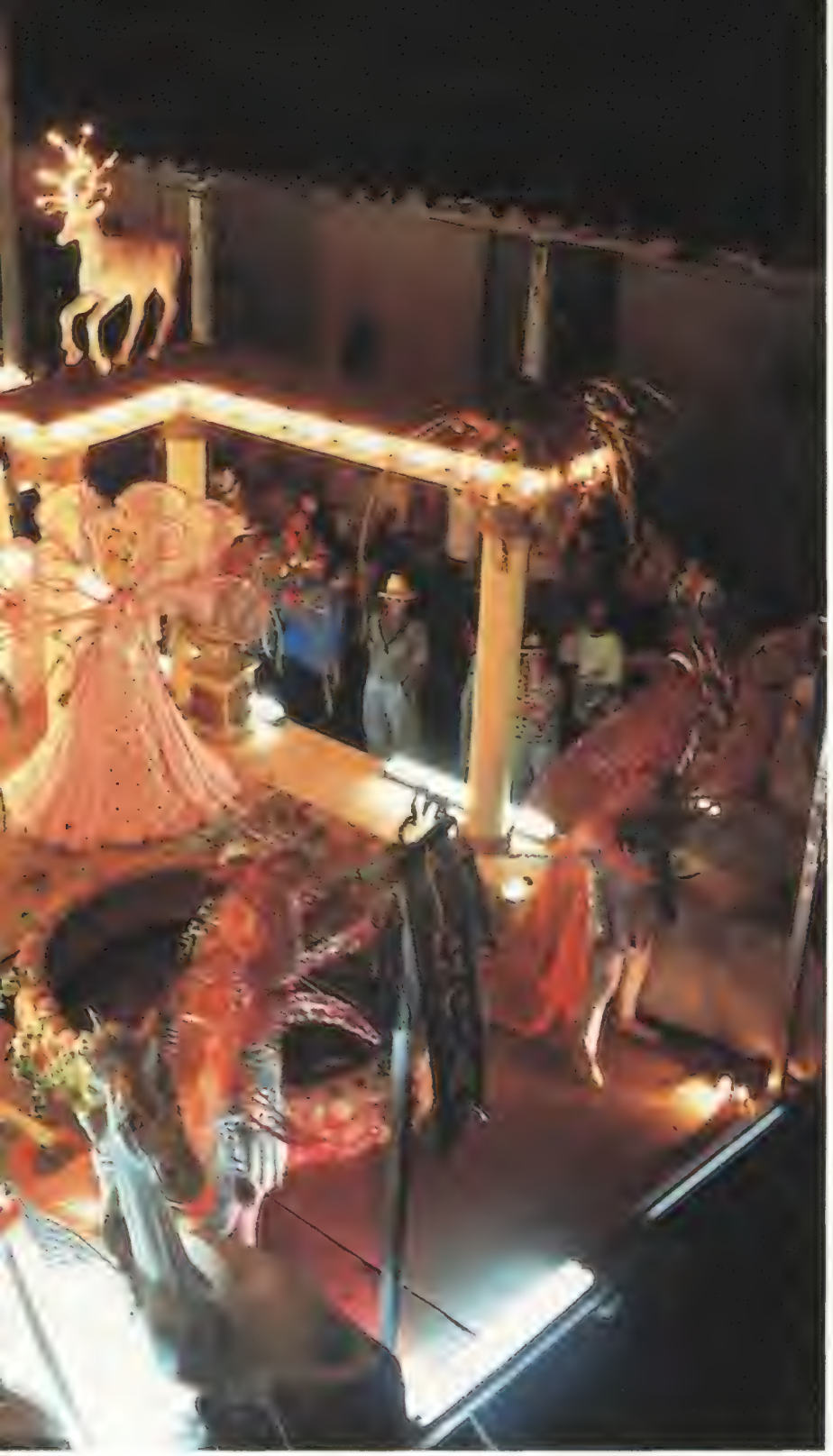
and dreamy eyes. Judging by the effort it costs him to climb up and wave the heavy banner, it's obvious that he's had too much rum.

The black-skinned Guanijibes flag-bearer, the muscles of his bare torso gleaming, climbs after his rival with the agility of a circus acrobat. To the joy of his supporters, he reaches a rooftop above his adversary and waves his blue flag even higher than La Loma's, a broad grin on his face. Flustered, the *lomero* scampers on the rooftops with an unsure step to an even higher spot, carrying the big, heavy flagpole and the La Loma flag. He is waving it there when someone next to me, putting rivalry aside, says, "I just hope he doesn't fall and hurt himself. It's happened before."

As if an incantation has just been pronounced, it's not the flag-bearer that falls, but the flag. Aaaaaah! Disgrace. Above our heads, the Guanijibes man waves his flag even more energetically, showing no sign of strain, as if he were waving a mere matchstick. The lomero trundles back to his original position, grief and shame marking his face.

But the parrandas are not a gymnastics meet; the floats and the fireworks displays are what will tip the balance and mark the winning neighborhood. Throughout the rest of the day, the people of Zulueta work feverishly to get ready for the evening bash. Where do the materials for the floats, costumes and fireworks come from? The floats are put together from found and invented materials and then nailed and glued in place on huge platforms that will ride atop the flatbeds of trucks, to be pulled by powerful field tractors. The costumes are often recyclings of already recycled cloth and lace and trim from previous parrandas. And the fireworks? Well, the fireworks ostensibly come from an official fireworks depot in a nearby town, but many are homemade, and from whatever source, there are far more than what is allowed by law—or human sanity.

I visit one fireworks warehouse (there are others that no one will talk about). It's a huge room full of explosives, right in the center of town. Outside the door, a small marching dance commences, a preview of things to come, and there are fireworks being lit, any of which could sidewind into the warehouse and . . . *hasta la vista!* The Parque Armona is ringed twice by sawhorses studded with fireworks, with more fireworks-laden sawhorses stretching for one full block at each of its four cor-



The town's two neighborhoods compete with each other for the best float and loudest fireworks display.

ners. Down in Guanijibes, another park is similarly armed. That doesn't include the countless hand-held fireworks. Nor the "mortars," cannon loaded with fireworks that produce a double explosion, one when the explosive is fired and another when it bursts in the air.

We're talking sheer firepower here. It's not the elegance of the display that will win points for the competing neighborhoods, but the relentlessness and volume of the bombast. Zulueteños are hooked on it. My cousin Tin Tin has been saying all week, "I can't wait for the fireworks to start." And my old aunt Rosa, who has a broken hip, floods with tears whenever she thinks about not being right in the middle of the fireworks this year. A tough, muscular guajiro, whose soiled T-shirt and work pants are the result of his round-the-clock hard labor building his neighborhood's float, takes me aside

Townsfolk set off so many fireworks during the night that the smell of gunpowder lingers two or three days.

to tell me that the authorities have set a limit on the fireworks each side can set off. "When you go back," he confides, "tell my people that I would die for my neighborhood, and that if these policemen don't let us use all we have, I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know." And he breaks into tears.

As the night of December 31 falls, the town of Zulueta is literally ready to go off. The La Loma float begins its stately descent down the main street. Its theme is an elaborate Russian fairy tale—Slavic folklore has slipped into Cuba via the Soviet influence—about beautiful princesses, gallant princes, evil wizards, and the metamorphosis of magic animals into people and vice versa. It has all been elaborately staged, with papier-mâché elephants, dances and acted-out dramatic sequences that follow a narration underscored by a musical track. After the float has made the trip down to the town's major crossroads and back up to the park, a huge fireworks explosion set off by the lomeros shakes Zulueta.

The Guanijibes float is no less elaborate, though its theme, "triumphant backdrops," is not as exotic. On platforms of various heights there are characters who recall the themes of floats that have won previous parrandas competitions: Helen of Troy, Swan Lake, the Emperor and the Nightingale, Romeo and Juliet. This one is a crowd-pleaser, more successful than the dense narrative of the La Loma float. When it reaches the crossroads, a trapdoor opens and a figure all in white (representing the African goddess Obatalá, it is later explained) rises from the depths of the float. She is

merely a mannequin, but veiled in smoke and darkness she is enlivened by a huge fireworks display—beautiful lights, not just bomb blasts—released in perfect timing so as to rise behind the float like a heavenly crown.

"Tasteful," everyone agrees when the cheering subsides. After the flag incident and the clear advantage of the Guanijibes float, the guanijiberos seem to have the edge. But the fireworks display is yet to come. And it does come. For the next several hours—all through the night, in fact—the exhilarating explosions never cease. The sawhorses that ring the Parque Armona are refilled no fewer than three times. My clothes are impregnated with the smell of gunpowder, and for the next couple of days the whole town reeks of it.

By a rough calculation, I figure half a million units of fireworks may have gone off that night. It's a dizzying experience. Blinding smoke. The spark of lighted fireworks. People dashing in and out of the fireworks setups to stop a premature explosion or start the right one. Man-made mayhem. Calculated chaos. And noise! With the whole town blowing up in my ears, I fall asleep late that night only to have my sleep interrupted in the late morning by . . . silence.

Who wins the 100th Zulueta parrandas? As always, it's popular sentiment that decides. My own loyalties are with Guanijibes; although Aunt América and my cousins Julio and Tin Tin, on my maternal grandmother's side of the family, live up in La Loma, they retain their loyalty to their family's origin down the hill; and my father's side still lives downhill in Guanijibes.

Once, years ago, the zulueteños tried having an impartial jury, but neighborhood passions ran so hot that it became too dangerous for the jurors to pass judgment. If the elegance of the floats and costumes were the true criterion, Guanijibes would be the winner this year. But, agree the zulueteños (the lomeros loudly, in public; the guanijiberos quietly, in private), La Loma out-boomed Guanijibes. The following day, in a gesture of friendship and sibling solidarity, both neighborhoods dance through the town in a joint victory parade, and both flags are raised in triumph. On this, the centennial year, the winner is not a neighborhood but, instead, the spirit of unbridled imagination.

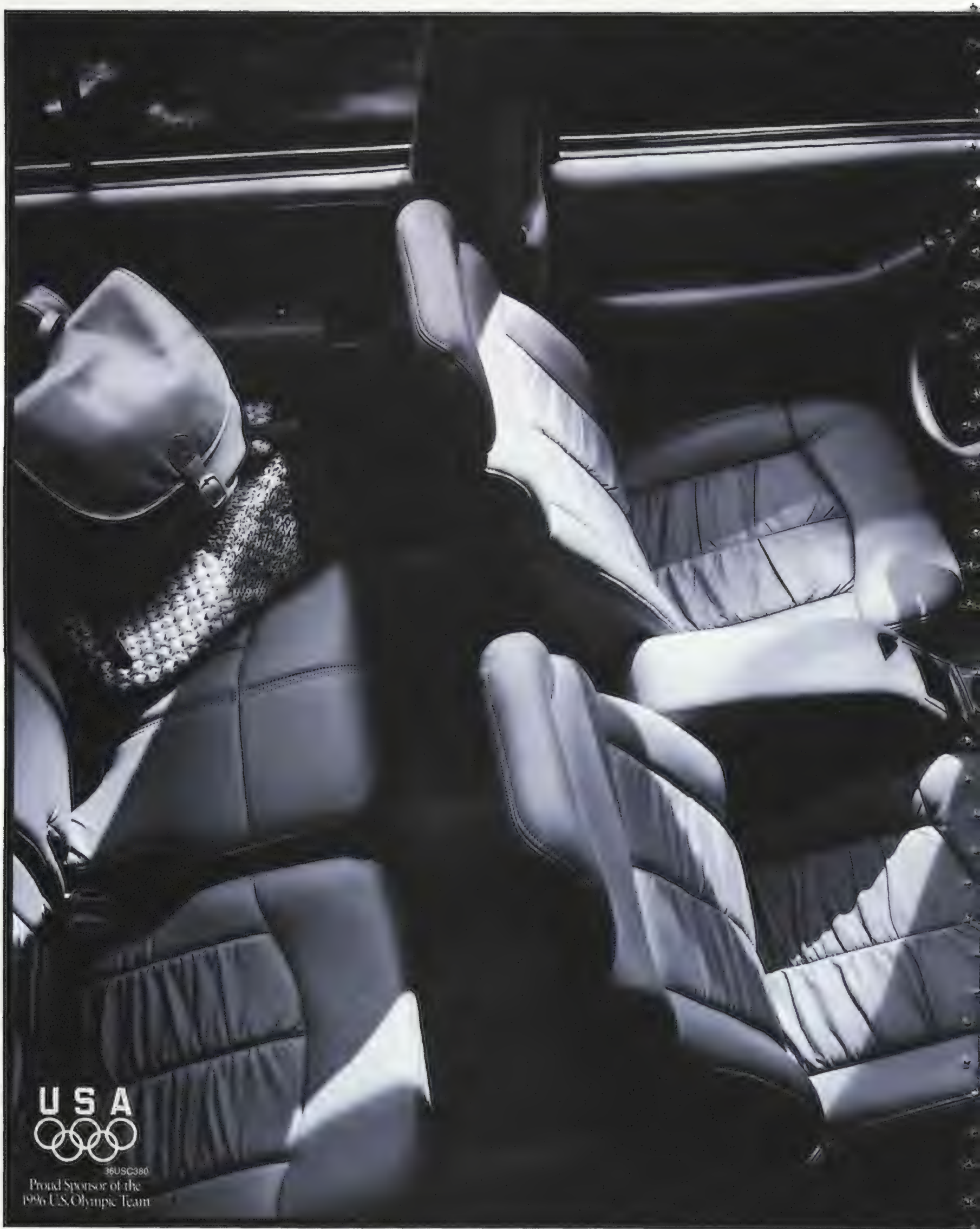
And, in a way, those of us who have come back to Zulueta are winners, too. The parrandas are the public celebration I have come here to witness. But I also came for something else, something locked in my father's dreams and my own childhood memories. On the night I arrived, I was struck by the beauty of the town; the starry night served as a backdrop to Zulueta's modest one- and two-story houses, its portals, its impossibly high ceilings, its old cobbled streets, its tropical fruit trees silhouetted against the black sky.

The morning after my arrival, before the festivities got under way, my family up the hill gave me lunch in the backyard of one of their houses. Spectacular white orchids grew next to the table that had been set up outside, where we ate black beans and rice, roast pork, boiled cassava in garlic sauce, and a salad of local tomatoes and greens, and drank wine my uncle had made from oranges. I felt like a prodigal son. In the Cuban countryside, people make do for food, growing their own beans and vegetables, fattening an animal for a special occasion, trading with neighbors who may have eggs, tomatoes, oranges, a chicken.

Even more amazing than the zulueteños' ability to stage a lavish celebration during a time of severe economic hardship is their capacity to maintain this quietly paced, provincial family life. Food is not easy to come by in Cuba today and, if so many things are homemade, like my uncle's wine, it's because there are few manufactured goods for sale. Even when they are available, there is no hard currency with which to purchase them. Politically, Cuba teeters on the brink of uncertainty. It's an anxious situation; in Havana, among the intelligentsia, one can see the signs of that anxiety. But here in this hill town, in spite of the hardships my family and their neighbors face every day, I sense a deep ease.

Perhaps Zulueta's isolation has been a blessing in disguise. Regardless of what change is coming to this country—or even what lack of change—the native children of this town will always know who they are: zulueteños all year round, but guanijiberos and lomeros at year's end. Having come back here after so many years, some of that ease has rubbed off on me, and at least part of me also knows now with great certainty who I am. I have found my childhood. I have come home.

All partied out for another year, a *zulueteño*—still puffing the cigar he used to light fuses—heads home.



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By Bil Gilbert

That 'little armored thing' doesn't get by on looks alone

It appears to be made out of spare parts, but the only mammal equipped with a carapace is actually a model of ecological efficiency

According to certain lore masters of the ancient Maya, Hachakyum, the Sun God, once became nettled by the oafish behavior of two lesser immortals. At a ceremony attended by their divine peers, he persuaded them to sit down together on a bench. Then, by magical means, Hachakyum changed the bench into a pair of armadillos, the first such creatures ever seen. They immediately leaped straight up into the air, a behavior that is still often displayed by the species. The two gods were tumbled onto their backsides and humiliated. The armadillos scampered off into the brush to become progenitors of their kind.

Since that tale was conjured up, theories about the origins of species have changed considerably, but the notion that the armadillo was created as a practical joke remains a perfectly understandable one. The creature looks as though it might have been hastily cobbled together from spare turtle, rabbit, woodchuck and anteater parts. As for its activities and bodily functions, they are in many respects even more improbable than its appearance.

In eras past, there were many different kinds of armadillos—including one beast the size of a rhinoceros—but the family Dasypodidae consists of just 20 species. All first evolved in South America, and mainly they continue to live there. The exception is the most common and cosmopolitan member of the family, which ranges from Argentina at least as far north as Missouri. This is the nine-banded armadillo, *Dasypus novemcinctus,* the only species now found in this country and, except where otherwise noted, the primary subject of this account.

The most bizarre and obvious feature of the armadillo is that, unlike any other mammal, it is encased in a true shell. (The name "armadillo," which means "little armored thing," was given to the animal by the Spanish when they arrived in the New World.) The carapace of the nine-banded species is made up of some 2,500 bony plates overlaid with cuticle-like scales. This armor covers the animal's back, sides, upper tail and forehead, excepting the mulish ears. The underparts are bare except for sparse, coarse hair. Contrary to popular belief, nine-banded armadillos cannot curl into tight, impregnable balls. Even if they could, this would not be an effective defense, since medium-to-large carnivores, including domestic dogs, can easily bite through armadillo shells, which are somewhat pliable and relatively thin.

For protective purposes, the smoothness of the carapace is probably more important than its hardness. When an armadillo is crouched in a hole—and with its powerful foreclaws, the animal is a very able digger—it is difficult for a potential predator to get a good grip on its armored back. Also, covered as they are, armadillos can slip easily through dense, thorny thickets, which impede and punish pursuers who are protected only by skin, fur, pants and shirts.

Oddly, considering its short legs and football-like shape, an armadillo can scuttle along at about the speed of a squirrel and, as noted above, it is an impressive leaper, being able to jump up three or four feet when startled. This ability has no doubt been useful in dealing with traditional predators, but these days it is often a fatally counterproductive response. Armadillos are among the most common road kills in certain parts of the South. Students of their behavior believe that many of these victims are animals who, while ambling along on or across a highway, become alarmed by approaching vehicles and leap directly into their path.

Armadillos are surprisingly adept in the water. Gulping and holding in air to make themselves buoyant, they are good swimmers on the surface, using a strong dog-paddle stroke. More unconventionally, by expelling air so that their shells act as weights, they can sink and hide or simply walk across the bottom of a small stream or pond. Observers have noted that under such circumstances, they can go without breathing for at least six minutes.

Given these attributes, armadillos are able to make their rounds without much harassment, foraging through the brush for insects and other invertebrates, which they scoop up with their long, anteater-like

A nine-banded armadillo foraging in Florida brush makes up in persistence what it lacks in charisma.

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Extinct ancestors of the armadillo, glyptodonts of the middle Pleistocene browse in Argentine habitat. Giant sloth surveys area in background.

tongues. Occasionally they also feed on amphibians and reptiles, but only smallish, softish ones, since armadillos have no incisors or canines and only spikelike, unenameled molars. Larry Herbst, a veterinarian at the University of Florida who once studied armadillos, has seen them eating small frogs. He says the process is slow and messy, the prey essentially being gummed and gulped.

The intelligence of armadillos, like their teeth, appears to be limited. In proportion to their body size, usually seven to ten pounds, their brains are among the smallest possessed by any North American mammal. "They are, as we commonly think of it, rather stupid," says Eleanor Storrs, a professor at the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, who has been studying these creatures for more than 30 years. She and her husband, Harry Burchfield, a biochemist, are generally acknowledged as being not only among the world's leading authorities on armadillos but also very likely their greatest admirers. Therefore, Storrs immediately qualifies her seemingly derogatory comment. "Being intelligent is of course not everything. It's only one strategy for coping with the environment. In other respects, the adaptations of armadillos are ingenious and fascinating. You might even think of them as brilliant because these are very ancient and successful creatures."

The activities of armadillos strongly support Storrs' point about their evolutionary astuteness. They belong to an order of mammals, Xenarthra, that includes sloths and anteaters, which evolved some 50 million years ago in South America. (Man, by contrast, has been around for less than a million years.) So long as that continent remained isolated from the rest of the terrestrial world, the Xenarthra and several other now-extinct mammalian orders had very little competition and expanded into a great variety of niches. Then, about three million years ago, South and North America became linked by a land bridge.

Using that new topographical causeway, a number of North American

Bil Gilbert has never had, nor does he expect to have, a pet armadillo. He wrote about Michigan's Beaver Island in the August SMITHSONIAN.

species moved into the Southern Hemisphere. Of special importance were certain feline and canine predators that had become, as Harry Burchfield puts it, "world-class killers." Unable to cope with them, about 70 percent of the mammals that had originated in South America disappeared. However, though they gave up some ecological ground, armadillos were not routed and in fact commenced a counterinvasion.

Working their way up through Central America, some armadillo species were able to establish themselves as far north as the Ohio River Valley. Among them was a species quite similar to the contemporary nine-banded armadillo and another about the size of a black bear. Between five thousand and ten thousand years ago, for reasons that remain unclear, all of the armadillos in what is now the United States were extirpated. According to fossil and archaeological records, none reappeared here until around 1850, when nine-banded armadillos began to swim, or perhaps walk, across the Rio Grande, establishing breeding populations in southern Texas.

From that beachhead, the resourceful creatures pushed north and east, occupying territories in Louisiana and then Mississippi. In 1922 the proprietor of a private zoo near Cocoa, Florida, acquired a pair of armadillos from Texas to display at his establishment. They escaped and proliferated. By 1950 the descendants of those animals and escapees from other zoos had become common throughout much of south and central Florida and were moving westward into the panhandle of that state. There they subsequently met and apparently bred with other armadillos that had "naturally" pioneered eastward from Louisiana and Mississippi.

Brazilian three-banded armadillo rolls into a ball; V-shaped "flap" is its tail.

Adult emerges from den. Armadillos do not aggressively defend territories.

No comprehensive census has been made, but according to extrapolative estimates the country's armadillo population, which was zero a century and a half ago, is currently between 30 million and 50 million. Although the heart of the species' range is a 100-mile-wide belt inland from the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic coast, armadillos are breeding southward from Oklahoma, Arkansas, northern Mississippi and North Carolina. Occasionally they have been found in New Mexico, Kansas and Missouri.

The creatures now seem to be close to the limits of their potential range. This is because the armadillo has a low body temperature and, despite its shell, is not well insulated to prevent loss of body heat. Furthermore, a nine-banded armadillo does not hibernate and has little capacity to build up energy-storing fat deposits. Therefore it must continue to forage for invertebrates throughout the year, which it cannot do if the ground is frozen or snow-covered for appreciable periods. Even in the Deep South, young armadillos sometimes die during prolonged periods of cold weather.

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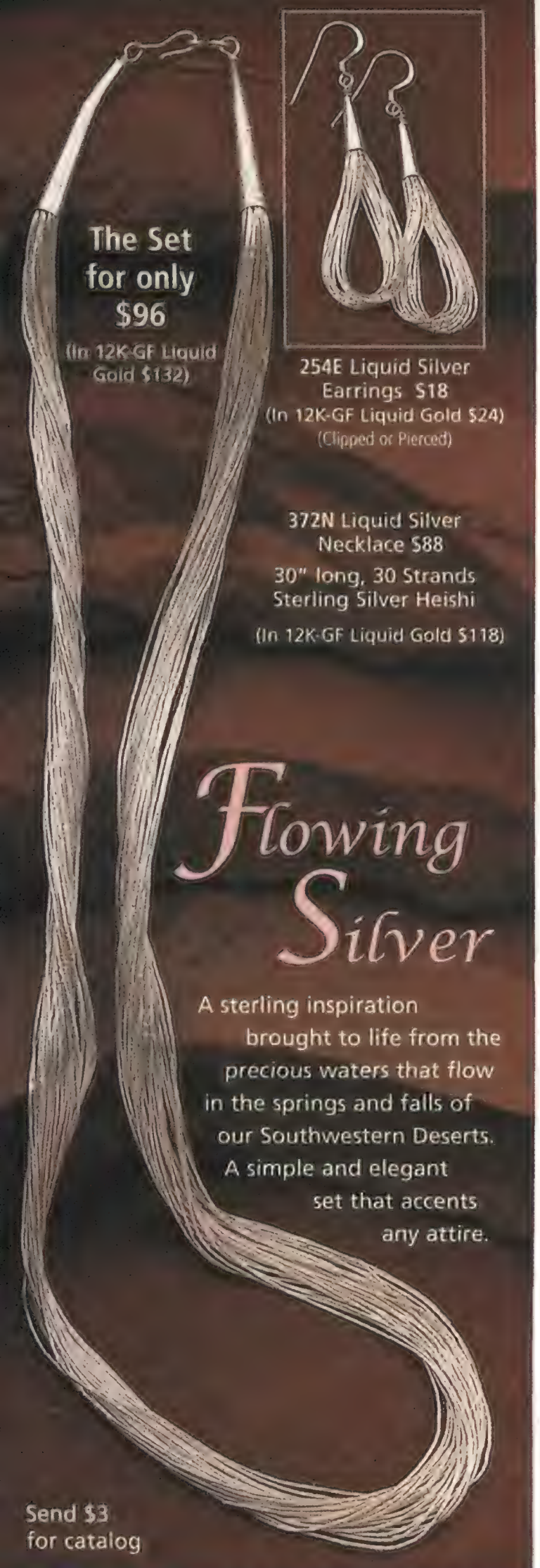
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that during the past several centuries the activities of people have been responsible for substantial changes, both increases and decreases, in the numbers and ranges of other species. Clearly the nine-banded armadillo, like the carp, crow, coyote and many other animals, is an invigorated species—one that is currently doing very well. There are various theories about how and why we have contributed to its prosperity. One is that during the past hundred years or so we have eliminated or considerably thinned out such potential armadillo hunters as bears, wolves and cougars. However, Harry Burchfield believes that this has been a very minor factor. He points out that because of their defensive equipment and elusiveness, armadillos seem to be less affected than most small mammals by predation.

A better explanation, Burchfield believes, is that armadillos were first drawn to and thrived in South Texas because of the rise of the cattle industry in the 19th century. This created considerable new brush and glade habitat, which armadillos favor. Also the abundance of cattle dung and carcasses caused a proliferation of insect populations, on which armadillos feed. Agricultural developments in the 20th century have continued to improve habitat and food resources for armadillos, which are not at all finicky about eating anything in the bug line. The trend toward monoculture (planting the same crops over large areas) leads to explosions in insect popula-

A female armadillo rolls on her back to get rid of bothersome insects.

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tions, which are suppressed but by no means eradicated with pesticides. In this connection, another attribute especially suits armadillos for contemporary living. Burchfield has found that they appear to have an extremely high tolerance for most commonly used agricultural chemicals.

Like other pioneering species, armadillos are reproductively vigorous, but again in their own peculiar way. There are folktales to the effect that females, when receptive, roll over and wait on their armored backs, exposing their underparts to accommodate males. Until recently, there had been no documented observations of armadillos copulating either in the wild or in captivity. Now we know that the male mounts the female from behind.

Armor of the pink fairy armadillo protects only the animal's spinal column. Almost extinct, the species is found mainly in Argentina.

Mating occurs during the summer months and often takes place underground in burrows. As is the case with certain other mammals, including members of the weasel family, implantation of the fertilized egg into the wall of the uterus is delayed until early winter. That is when the fertilized egg—armadillos produce only one a year—begins to divide, eventually producing four embryos. Normal litters, which appear the following spring, always contain four genetically identical infants of the same sex. So far as is known, the nine-banded armadillo and several of its close South American relatives are the only mammals in which such double-twinning regularly occurs. If it were not for this phenom-

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Anteater-like tongue goes to work on termites it found in rotting wood.

enon, females would produce only one offspring a year, and the armadillo might well have disappeared long ago.

Eleanor Storrs commenced her work with the animals as a graduate student at the University of Texas in the 1960s. A decade ago, she discovered a reproductive attribute she and others at first found literally incredible. Since nine-banded armadillos seldom mate in captivity, Storrs established a laboratory colony, currently consisting of 70 individuals, by capturing free-ranging animals. She noted that some lab females, housed alone, produced offspring more than a year after being taken from the wild. Intrigued, she began investigating these seemingly "virgin" births. After eliminating any possibility of contact with males, Storrs found that under conditions that are stressful for females, the implantation of fertilized eggs, and therefore embryo development, might be delayed for as long as two years after mating.

Pregnancies of such length and variability are unique to armadillos. How often they occur in the wild remains to be determined, but they would seem to be an advantageous option for species pioneering into new territories. Reproduction can continue even though meetings between males and females are irregular, and births may be postponed when the animals find themselves in inauspicious environmental circumstances.

Storrs has kept hundreds of armadillos in labs and raised litters in her

home. She has found that they adapt to captivity rather easily. Adults taken from the wild eat moistened cat food and show few signs of psychic distress. However, Storrs does not recommend trying to keep armadillos as house pets. Among other things, they satisfy their urge to explore crevices by probing about in cupboards and closets, and underneath furniture and rugs. They do so noisily, sounding somewhat like castanets as they clatter about on floors and tiles. Though they are docile and harmless, Storrs says they are not much given to forming emotional attachments with other species.

Sue McPhee disagrees about the bonding capacities of armadillos. Presently she and her husband share a townhouse on the West Coast with four adult armadillos and four young ones. McPhee flies cargo planes for a living; her husband, Lynn, is employed in the petrochemical industry. When she first encountered armadillos in East Texas, McPhee says, "it was love at first sight." She learned a lot about the animals and eventually obtained the necessary permits that allow her to keep them.

McPhee's adult armadillo companions are Bluebonnet, a female, and three males—Buzz Bomb, Chico and Scooter. All of them were taken from the wild when less than 3 months old. Last year McPhee witnessed Chico copulating with Bluebonnet, and she has a video to prove it—the only such documentation known to exist. Bluebonnet gave birth to four identical female babies in March of this year, and McPhee has been helping her raise them at

A treasury of armadillo kitsch: they remain popular items with buying public.

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[2] WORTH'S RANKING IN ITS MAY 1995 ISSUE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF LIPPER ANALYTICAL SERVICES DATA COMPARING ANNUALIZED RETURN OF 138 EQUITY-INCOME FUNDS FOR THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD ENDED 3/23/95, ASSUMING REINVESTMENT OF DIVIDENDS AND CAPITAL GAINS.

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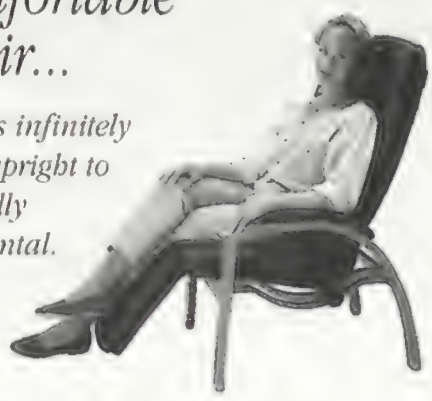

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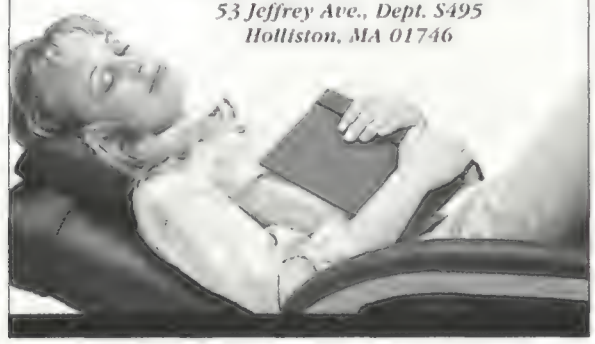

Resembling a football with ears, an armadillo surges across the water at a wildlife refuge in Florida. The animals like to swim and are good at it.

home. Armadillo offspring are usually nursed by the mother for three months or so, gradually learning to fend for themselves. McPhee's adults thrive on dried chow, but she regularly gives them special treats: beetles, crickets, sow bugs and grapes.

When McPhee is not home, her pets are kept in individual cages, but when she returns they're given the run of the house. McPhee frequently drives Bluebonnet, Buzz Bomb, Chico and Scooter to the home of an obliging friend who has a securely fenced yard and a wading pool. There they are free to dig, swim and, as McPhee puts it, "just be 'dillos." As to adaptiveness, she says armadillos can be housebroken more easily and quickly than cats. All four of them know their own names and come when called.

Evidently pet armadillos acquire a gregariousness that is not typical of wild ones. Except when they are mating, the creatures' social life in the wild is minimal. Occasionally adults temporarily share a burrow, but this seems to be accidental rather than companionate or cooperative. On the other hand, armadillos seldom show hostility to one another; they do not aggressively establish or defend their rather small (from two to ten acres) home ranges. If food resources are adequate, population densities can increase rapidly.

Constantly grubbing about as they forage, frequently digging shallow holes for rest and retreat, armadillos are often an aggravation to gardeners and, in some situations, farmers. There are also occasional warnings from conservationists that native insect populations may be threatened by armadillos; an adult scarfs down about 200 pounds of invertebrates a year. However, these concerns are not general since many people prefer armadillos to the creatures they eat. Most notably they are effective predators on fire ants, another relatively recent invader of the Southern United States (SMITHSONIAN, July 1990).

Being abundant, easy to catch and, it is said, reasonably palatable, armadillos are occasionally eaten by people. They were served up fairly often, in fact, during the hard Depression years of the 1930s when, in rural areas, the animals became mockingly known as "Hoover hogs" or "Texas turkeys." Also, there is a small, steady demand for armadillo shells, which are converted into ashtrays, purses, clock hous-

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The scientific community paid little attention to armadillos until the early 1970s when, largely because of a study by Storrs and microbiologist W. F. Kirchheimer, it was found that the animals make suitable hosts for the bacillus that causes leprosy in humans. This enabled medical researchers to use infected armadillos as living test tubes that provided sufficient quantities of the bacillus for experimental work. As a result, treatment of leprosy has greatly improved during the past two decades, and a vaccine is being developed that may provide immunity to entire communities in tropical areas where the disease is still prevalent.

Can armadillos transmit leprosy to us? According to Richard Truman of the U.S. Public Health Service there is no hard evidence that they can. In the course of his studies over the past ten years, Truman has found that the number of new cases of leprosy has remained relatively constant among native-born Americans—some 30 to 40 each year. Leprosy is now most prevalent in tropical and subtropical areas among both humans and armadillos. "But frankly," Truman says, "we don't yet understand the relationships."

One good place to mingle with free-ranging armadillos is Merritt Island, the national wildlife refuge north of Cocoa, Florida. The refuge abuts the Kennedy Space Center, but immediately beyond that beehive of activity the island reverts to a more natural setting. In such habitat, swampy and studded with oak hummocks, it is possible on a spring evening to stroll within several feet of a foraging armadillo. Typically, the animal shows no signs of being alarmed by, curious about or even particularly aware of human bystanders.

In these circumstances armadillos give the impression of being preternaturally self-absorbed and single-minded. They lurch along through the brush like small organic tanks or large sow bugs. They are not prepossessing except for their faces, which are charming. Observing them as they go about their humble business within sight of the place where modern technology has recorded many of its greatest triumphs, it is hard not to reflect on the thought that, as wonders of nature, armadillos and all they imply are at least as thought-provoking as the space program and all it implies.

Armadillo aficionado Sue McPhee nuzzles two recent arrivals. She enjoys her boarders but cautions that they do not make ideal household pets.

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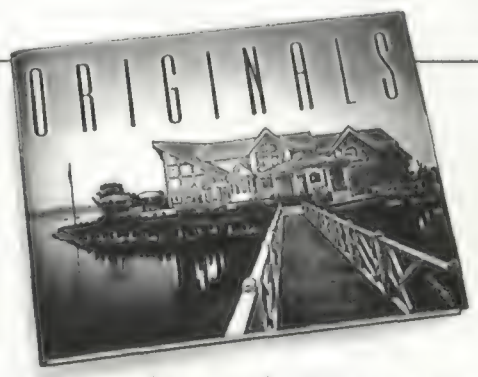

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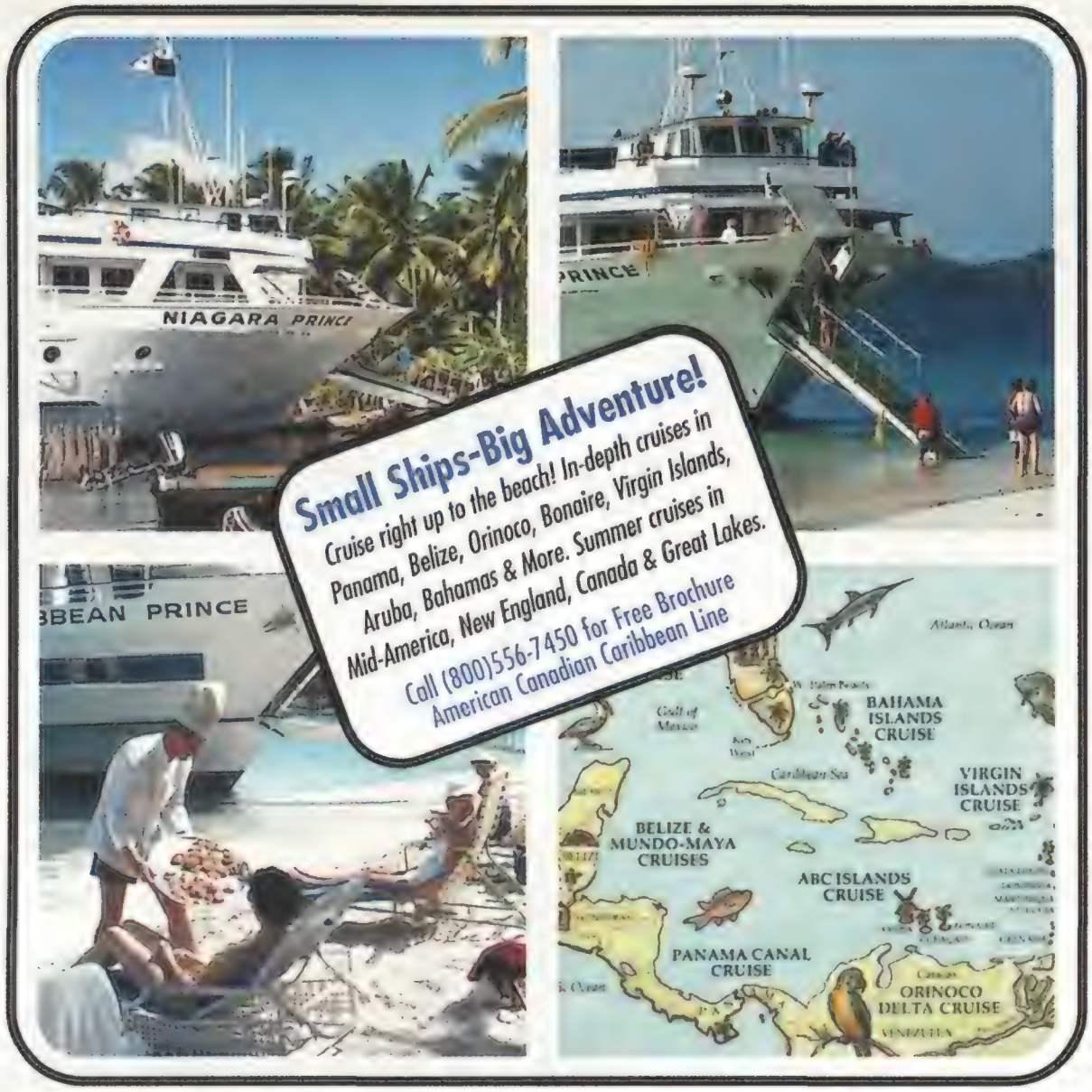
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Book Reviews

Peculiar People: The Story of My Life
Augustus Hare (Anita Miller and James Papp, Editors)
Academy Chicago, $26.95

Call a book charming in these benighted days and you risk burying it forever. Yet Augustus Hare's *Peculiar People* is just that. An abridgement of the six-volume autobiography of a late 19th-century British travel writer (1834-1903), it may sound like the epitome of Victorian dullness, but it gives as much pleasure as a country-house weekend with good shooting, lots of champagne and brilliantly amusing guests. No doubt Anita Miller and James Papp have chosen the best pages from Hare's original, but I for one will be combing second-hand bookshops for the complete set.

The joy of *Peculiar People* lies in its deceptively simple style, coupled with a flair for outrageous anecdote. Augustus Hare's mother, for instance, decided to give up her unwanted baby boy, our hero, to a widowed aunt: "My dear Maria, how very kind of you! Yes certainly, the baby shall be sent as soon as it is weaned; and if anyone else would like one, would you kindly recollect that we have others." If this sounds monstrous (in a deliciously black-humored way, of course), matters quickly grew far worse for young Augustus when his adoptive mother, out of the highest Christian ideals, became so "afraid of over-indulgence that she always went into the opposite extreme: and her constant habits of self-examination made her detect the slightest act of especial kindness into which she had been betrayed, and instantly determine not to repeat it."

The result is as harrowing a childhood as any in Dickens—or Edward

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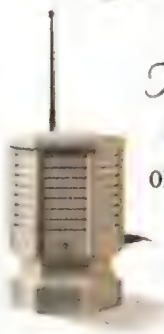

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Gorey. Augustus is refused playthings, playmates and treats. Delicious puddings would be spoken of at the dinner table, but "just as I was going to eat some of them, they were snatched away, and I was told to get up and carry them off to some poor person in the village." Worse yet, Augustus and his new "mother" fall under the dread dominion of Aunt Esther, the zealous, spiteful wife of an inept clergyman relative. Aunt Esther has conceived an intense hatred for the boy: "As if you ever *could* say anything worth hearing, as if it was ever *possible* that anyone could want to hear what you have to say." Every year she gives Augustus, for his birthday and Christmas, the very same present, a copy of *The Rudiments of Architecture,* "price ninepence, in a red cover. It was always the same, which not only saved expense, but also the trouble of thinking." At one point, to punish the boy, she actually hangs his beloved pet cat.

From out of this early nightmare, which included several months passed in an iron frame to correct a curvature of the spine, Hare developed an eye for human psychology and a taste for human eccentricity. During church services his Uncle Julius "had the oddest way of turning over the pages [of the Psalter] with his nose." At Oxford he becomes chummy with a fellow student: "It was very difficult to distinguish him from his twin brother Vernon; indeed, it would have been impossible to know them apart, if Vernon had not, fortunately for their friends, shot off some of his fingers." At one Brinkley Manor-ish country estate he encounters "Mr. Wooster, who came to arrange the collection of shells four years ago, and has never gone away." (Surely, a perfect subject for an Edward Lear limerick.) My favorite character, though, must be the Dean of Christ Church College, nicknamed "Presence-of-Mind" Smith. "In my life," he would tell his friends, "there has been one most fortunate incident. A friend of mine persuaded me to go out with him in a boat upon a lake. I did not wish to go, but he persuaded me, and I went. By the intervention of Providence, I took my umbrella with me. We had not been long on the lake when the violence of the waves threw my friend out of the boat drowning, and he sank. Soon, as is the case with drowning persons, he came up again, and clutched hold of the side of the boat. Then such, providentially, was my

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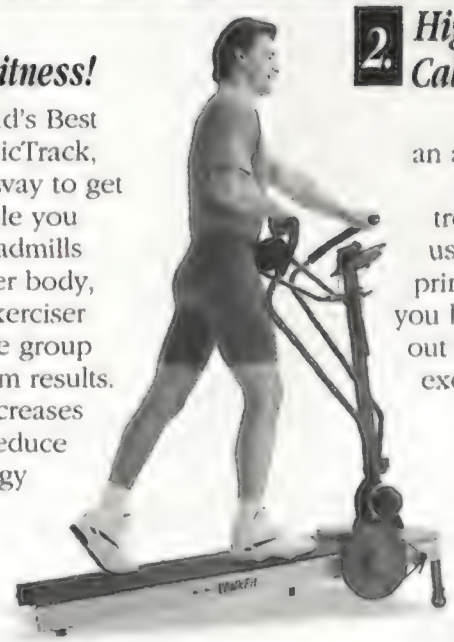

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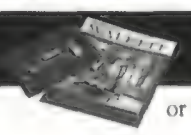

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presence of mind, that I seized my umbrella and rapped him violently on the knuckles till he let go. He sank, and I was saved."

Though Hare gained much success with his guidebooks, especially those devoted to Italy, his family life continued to be dogged with disaster. When his sister Esmeralda dies suddenly, he suspects his brother of having done her in for their inheritance—but it turns out that the young woman succumbed from a lifetime of copper poisoning, the result of having swallowed a thimble in childhood. Later Hare finds himself in a lawsuit over the ownership of a family portrait, then is accused of plagiarism, once seriously and once amusingly. In the latter instance, he had been showing tourists the sites around the Forum in Rome when he noticed that the group was being spied upon by an increasingly distressed stranger. After Hare concluded his tour, the unknown man stepped forth: "All that this person has been telling you about the Palace of the Caesars, he has had the effrontery to relate to you as if it were his own. You will be astounded, gentlemen and ladies, to hear that it is taken—word for word, without the slightest acknowledgement, from Mr. Hare's 'Walks in Rome.'"

In his later years, Augustus Hare grew especially celebrated in aristocratic circles for his retellings of strange stories, filled with ghosts, murderous servants, visionary dreams, vampires, mad guests and imprisoned nobility. *Peculiar People* retells a score of these tales, some truly frightening but most cozily shivery, or even humorous, as in the famous story of the noblewoman who was awakened from sleep to find that the butler, walking in his sleep, had laid a table for 14 on her bedclothes. Still, pride of place should go to this anecdote about a perennially unpunctual American:

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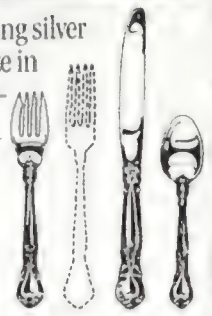
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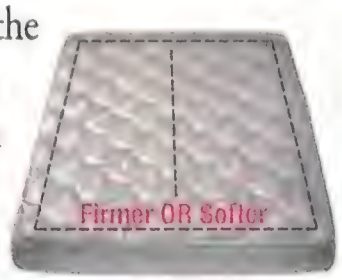

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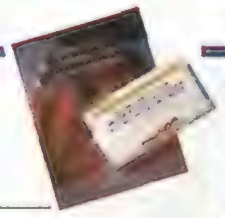

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Michael Dirda is a writer and editor for *Washington Post Book World.*

Scenes from the Life of a City
Eric Homberger
Yale University Press, $30

New York—who can resist it? Beautiful and cruel, shameless, arrogant, crazed by greed and as American, always, as Main Street, New York exerts a fascination that never quits. New York seems in so many ways to be America writ large and gaudy, it's us to the nth, or as one 19th-century writer called it, "an intensification of the country."

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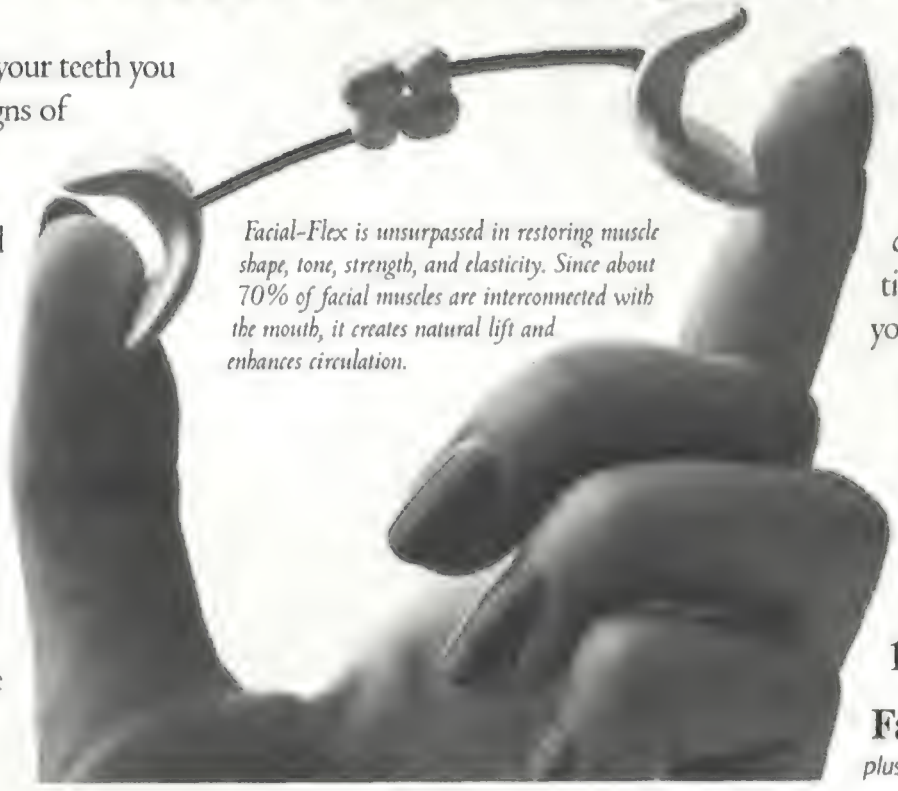

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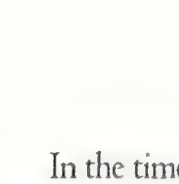

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by landlords. The result was at least statistically impressive: in its first six months the new health board removed 103 dead horses from the city, 3,865 deceased dogs and cats, and 38,314 loads of "night soil," not to mention 155,520 pounds of "unsound fish."

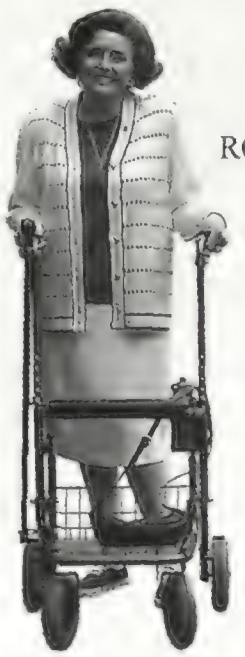
The other hero is Frederick Law Olmsted, who emerged as a beacon of integrity and sensitivity as the designer and architect of Central Park. Olmsted managed what appeared to be an impossibility: he designed and built a tremendous, hugely expensive civic project without stealing or helping anyone else steal, and did a magnificent job in the process. Part of Olmsted's secret was his link to the city's upper crust, which smoothed his way, but his success was mainly due to his intelligence, foresight and sensitivity to the constituencies, including the poor, that he served.

The villains, of course, make for better reading. "Slippery Dick" Connolly was an up-from-the-streets Irish kid who paid his dues in the Tammany organization and was ultimately rewarded by becoming comptroller in a city administration where up to 65 percent of all expenditures wound up in the billfolds of Connolly, his leader "Boss" Tweed and their cohorts.

The Tweed Ring was New York moxie in action; they stole almost openly, with the attitude that they somehow deserved whatever booty they could pillage. When civic righteousness finally bubbled to the surface in 1871, Slippery Dick was abandoned by his sometime patron Tweed, but Connolly got the last laugh by jumping bail on New Year's Day 1872 and fleeing to a European exile made bearable by a rumored $6 million cushion. He also had the satisfaction of seeing one of his prosecutors on the reformist "Committee of Seventy" nailed for embezzlement.

There is ambivalence in these tales of shame and rascality, and there should be, because these are heroes with dirt on their boots and villains with the occasional semi-redeeming virtue. Connolly lived long enough to receive a strangely friendly obituary notice in the *New York Times*, which called him "a man of sagacity and shrewd common sense." And the final villain, the abortionist known as "Madame Restell," comes off as almost (but not quite) as much victim as victimizer.

An immigrant from England, Madame Restell became a wealthy if not



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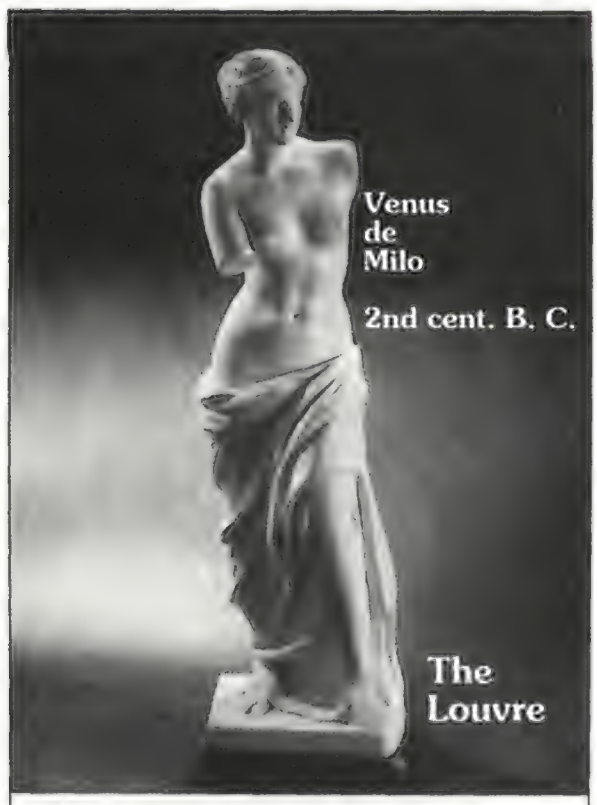

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venerated figure in New York, owner of a grand mansion on Fifth Avenue, by offering a service that was at first generally tolerated and later somewhat hypocritically condemned. Though illegal, abortions in 19th-century New York were an acceptable option for many high-caste women, and the newspaper ads offering a "remedy for married ladies whose health forbids a too rapid increase of family" were all but explicit. But Madame Restell, like so many who work the frontiers of permissible behavior, was overtaken by a change in the public mind. When reformers came howling after her she fought back with a blend of outspoken self-defense—contending that she was performing a useful social service—and discreet bribery, but it was too late. She endured one relatively comfortable jail term, but when she was about to be tried again she climbed into a bathtub and cut her throat with a carving knife.

Homberger might have had more fun with his material (though not Restell's suicide), but all in all he does a creditable job. He demonstrates that there have been few long-term victories in the eternal battle for New York City's soul, that greed, poverty, hypocrisy and corruption are always with us. But then there is also the occasional Olmsted, the surprising Smith, the recurrent saviors, offering just enough hope to make the struggle interesting.

Donald Dale Jackson is a writer based in rural Connecticut.

Tales My Father Never Told
Walter D. Edmonds
Syracuse University, $24.95

Walter D. Edmonds, winner of both the National Book Award and the Newbery Medal for children's literature, is best known for the historical novel *Drums Along the Mohawk*, published in 1936. Now, nearly 60 years later, the author looks back on his childhood with *Tales My Father Never Told*, a deeply personal memoir of his father and their sometimes discordant relationship.

"Memoirs should be celebrations of greatness," Edmonds writes, "of great men and women whose lives have affected human history, of great love, of scientific discovery, of wisdom that enabled society to improve the quality of life. Let my readers, if any, be warned. There is nothing of that in these pages. My father and I were fifty-three years apart and understanding was not easy

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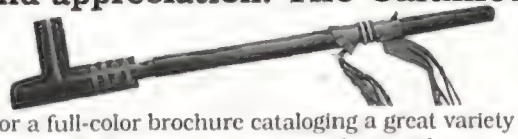
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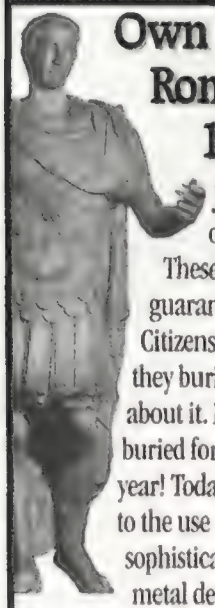

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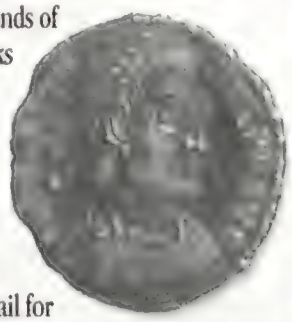

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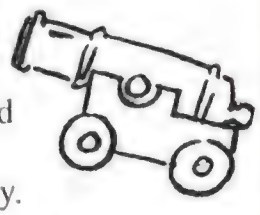

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to come by. The episodes, per force, are told from my point of view. But if we did not often understand each other then, in the end I was able to see that love had existed, existed on both sides, and perhaps that disclosure is justification for this small book."

The warning is hardly necessary. Edmonds' graceful prose and vivid storytelling are more than enough justification for this or any book. The author has previously sketched a fictionalized portrait of his father in a book called *The South African Quirt*, but this new book is better balanced and more satisfying.

Edmonds constructs his memoir from interlocked vignettes, each illuminating a fresh aspect of his father's character. In one chapter, reminiscent of Norman Maclean's *A River Runs Through It* (SMITHSONIAN, September 1992), a shared passion for fly-fishing awakens a subtle rivalry between father and son. In another, young "Watty" attempts to apply one of his father's dinner-table lectures on public drunkenness to a neighborhood chipmunk, which has grown stuporous on fermented cherries.

Easily the funniest episode finds the 11-year-old Watty laboring for months in the solitary fastness of his room, learning to forge his father's signature. "Christmas came and went," he recalls. "My entire being was dedicated to my illicit purpose. When at New Year's dinner I refused to eat creamed celery, which I despised, and was sent up to my room 'to think things over,' I lost not a moment in assembling my paraphernalia and going to work on the forgery." When at last the young Edmonds has mastered his father's elaborate script, he uses the newly acquired skill to forge a check for $1,000 made out to himself. "I didn't want to cash it," he tells his father when the counterfeit is discovered, "I just wanted to forge your signature."

Many of Edmonds' previous books have been set in upstate New York, most often along the Erie Canal. Here, the setting alternates between the family's home in New York City, where the elder Edmonds had a law practice, and a farmhouse to the north, scene of the author's happiest memories. Edmonds makes good use of both settings: "Motor coaches were beginning to supplant the horse-drawn omnibuses," he writes of a walk along Fifth Avenue with his father in 1914. "From time to time a private automobile stuttered by. Even a motorized hearse appeared and I start-

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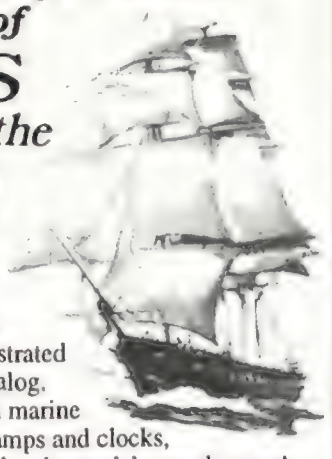

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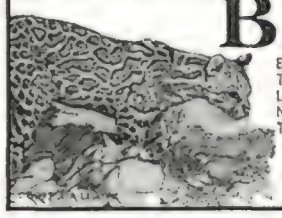

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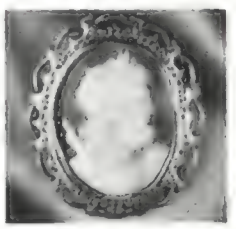

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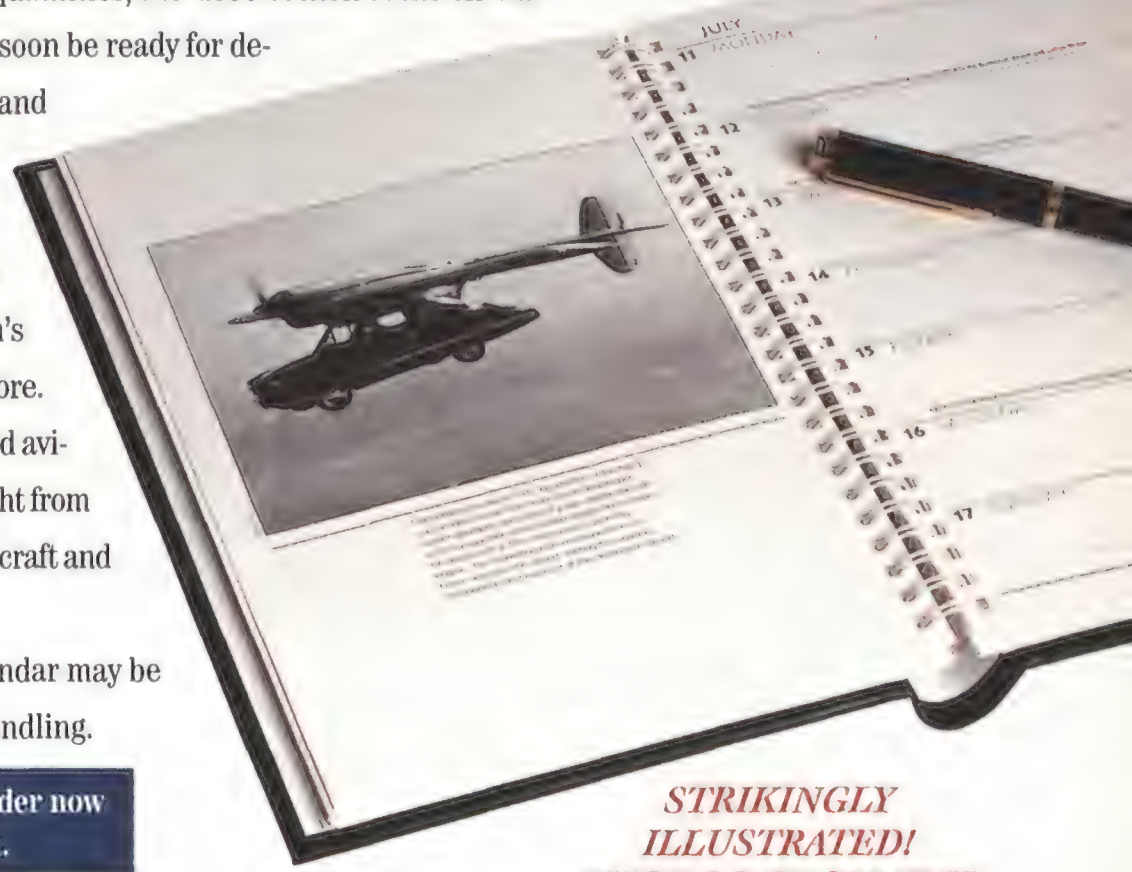

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ed to remove my cap and stand at attention as Father had taught my brother and me to do, rapping our heads sharply with his cane if we were slow to bare them. But to my surprise he paid no attention to the motor hearse and the thought flitted through my head that it was the netted horses and plumed vehicle that he respected more than the sad body on its final drive. As the years went by, also, it became obvious to us all that Father's affinity for the internal combustion engine was almost nonexistent."

Walter Edmonds, who was born in 1903, recognizes that the everyday particulars of his childhood will be unfamiliar to many readers. In presenting these seemingly humdrum details for a modern audience, he reveals much about his father's iron rule: "Mother smiled at me. Her quick ears had caught the rumble of the dumbwaiter in its swift ascent from the basement kitchen. That meant Father's poached egg was on its way. To most people, serving a poached egg for a man's breakfast would seem a simple procedure. In the Edmonds household it was not. Father's specifications for his egg were relentlessly precise. The egg on its toast must have been cooked just long enough to be runny at the first touch of the fork; the yoke perfectly round and yellow; the white white, no trace of transparency was countenanced; the toast a moderate brown and perfectly flat, with the crust left on but, because of sensitive teeth, the crust must be softened by a trickle of hot water from the kettle; a *trickle* mind you; too much water would reduce the toast to 'quag.' And the finished artifact had to be rushed the length of the kitchen to the dumbwaiter, where the cook slapped the lift rope and the waitress on the floor above pulled on the rope with such abandon as to set the pulleys squealing. Her quick steps pattered through the pantry, into the dining room, down the length of the table, and, pink-cheeked and breathless, she put the egg in front of Father.

"After an interminable moment he picked up his fork and touched it to the yoke. It ran. A quiet sigh escaped my mother's lips, and the waitress, even pinker-cheeked than before, vanished without a sound. This was a good day."

Not surprisingly, the elder Edmonds emerges as a prickly, distant figure whose entrenched habits left him ill-prepared for the children who came

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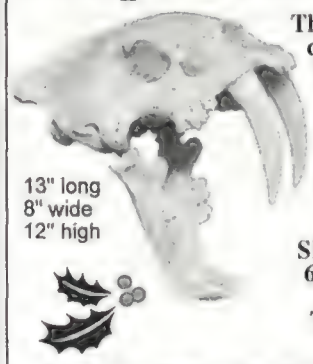

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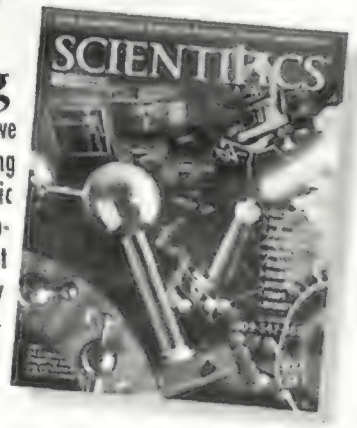

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late in life. He was a man better suited to fishing than fatherhood: "His eight-and-a-quarter-pound brook trout was, for many years, the largest caught in the Murray River in Quebec. And when my mother introduced him to his first born child, my brother John, proclaiming with tremulous pride that he weighed eight pounds and three ounces, Father reminded her that his trout was bigger."

For all of that, there is no trace of bitterness or recrimination in this book, and Edmonds looks back across the years with warmth and humor. He is an engaging and generous storyteller, and *Tales My Father Never Told* may well bring him a new generation of readers.

Toward the end of *Tales*, as the young Edmonds begins to publish stories, his father writes to offer a characteristic assessment: "I urge you to give up all thought of writing. Apply yourself with redoubled concentration to your studies. Our world needs people who will contribute to the values of life."

It is difficult to say what the elder Edmonds would have thought of the present volume, but the general reader can be in no doubt. The author has made a wholly agreeable contribution to the values of life.

Daniel Stashower is a novelist living and writing in London.

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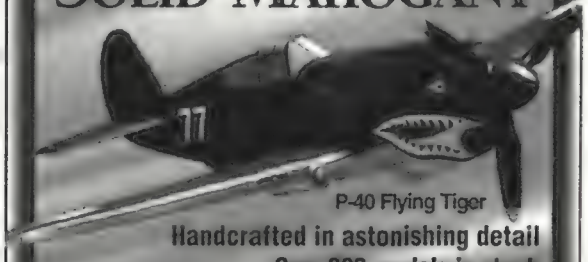
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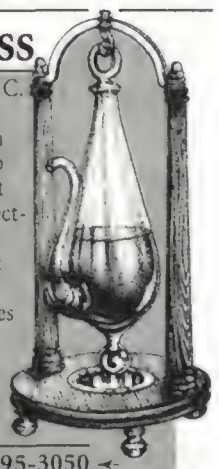
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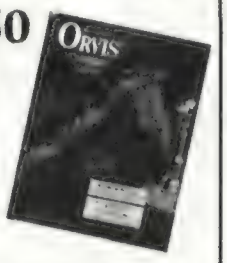
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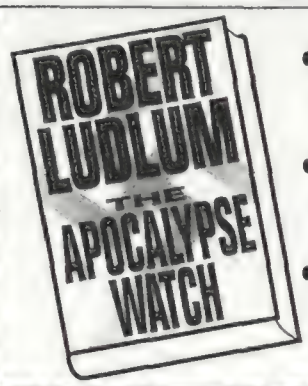

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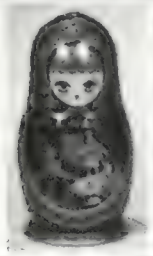
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Canes and Walking Sticks by Kurt Stein, Liberty Cap Books (York, Pennsylvania), 1974

Highlights Continued (p. 44)

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Las Vegas (p. 50)

Viva Las Vegas: After-Hours Architecture by Alan Hess, Chronicle Books (San Francisco), 1993

Las Vegas by Deke Castleman, Compass American Guides (Oakland, California), 1993

The Unofficial Guide to Las Vegas (annual) by Bob Sehlinger, Macmillan Travel (New York)

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"Vegas Effect" by Laurence Gonzales, *Men's Journal*, May 1995

Weekly newspaper (p. 89)

The Hard Way: The Odyssey of a Weekly Newspaper Editor by Alexander B. Brook, Bridge Works (Bridgehampton, New York), 1993

Publishers' Auxiliary (newspaper), National Newspaper Association, 1525 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 550, Arlington, Virginia 22209

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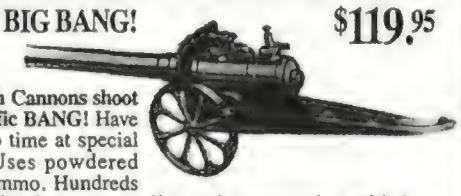
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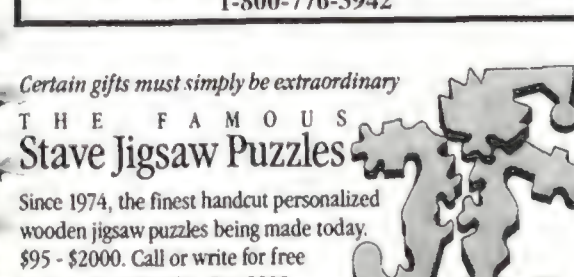

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By Robert W. Creamer

'They forced martinis down my throat and kept me prisoner all night'

We were in a summer cottage and our 6-year-old, Jimmy, was playing outside. Suddenly he appeared at the back door, tears streaming down his cheeks.

"I didn't mean to . . ." he blurted. "The little bird . . . I didn't think I'd hit it . . . I was just . . ."

Margaret calmed him down, and we learned what had happened. He had seen a wren near the ground and had tossed a stone at it, never dreaming he'd come close to it. To his surprise and horror he'd hit the bird and killed it. Or so he thought.

We knew this wren. There was a small birdhouse near the back door of the cottage, and when we sat on the patio we'd see a pair of wrens flitting to and from its tiny entrance. My wife said there must be eggs in the nest and that the wrens we saw were the parents. Now one of the parents was gone.

"Oh, Jimmy," my wife said.

"Where is the bird?" I said. "Maybe he isn't dead."

"He *is*," Jimmy said. "I buried him."

"You buried him? Where?"

We went outside and Jimmy led us to where he had scooped a shallow hole and had laid the bird to rest.

Except there was nothing there but the hole. The grave was empty.

I wondered if a cat had robbed the grave, but my wife spotted the wren lying nearby among some leaves and twigs, obviously hurt but alive. We picked him up—he looked at us without enthusiasm but gave no resistance—and carried him into the kitchen. We put him in a small cardboard box with shredded newspaper as a nest of sorts. He lay sprawled on his side, his bill half open, one wing splayed outward. His feathers were lined with dirt. He looked awful.

We put the box on a counter and stood around awkwardly, watching. Nothing happened. The bird just lay there. We felt helpless.

"Maybe we should give him some brandy," I said. "Don't they give people brandy? Would it work with a bird?"

"We haven't any brandy," my wife said.

"We have gin. Maybe we should give him some gin."

"You always think of gin."

"Well, we ought to do something."

I poured some Beefeater into a small glass and found a toothpick. Gently, Margaret reached into the box and lifted the bird. I held his beak open with one hand and with the other dipped the toothpick into the gin and shook a couple of drops down his throat. Wham! The wren reacted violently, broke from Margaret's grasp and fell into the box.

"I think we've killed him," I said.

"Oh, God," she said.

But he was still alive, his tiny chest rising and falling rapidly.

That night he was still alive, even seemed a little better. We worried about leaving the box in the kitchen in case the bird got out of it during the night. To be safe we put the box on the screened porch and made sure the doors were closed tight.

In the morning, with my wife watching from a window, I went out to the porch to check on things.

"He's not in the box!" I cried.

"Where is he? Where did he go?"

"I don't know! He's got to be around here someplace."

Then I saw him, a dirty, ruffled, rather indignant lump of feathers in a corner of the porch.

"There he is!" I yelled, and my voice must have startled him because he took off and fluttered around, looking for a way out. He hit a screen and collapsed to the floor, breathing hard. I opened the screen door and stood to one side, inviting him to escape. After a doubtful moment or two he took off and flew crookedly toward the door. He missed it by a foot, banged into another screen and hit the floor again.

We were appalled. That does it, I thought. He's cooked. But the little bird gathered himself, got to his feet and, I swear on my mother's grave, walked through the open doorway. He seemed to be limping a little. When he got to the top of the steps outside he paused for a moment and then took off, flying out in a wavering circle, around the house, we presumed, and back to the birdhouse near the kitchen door.

When Jimmy awoke we told him the good news, and to celebrate we decided to eat breakfast out on the patio. As we carried the breakfast dishes outside Margaret said, "Listen!"

It was a chorus of chirping, little piping chirps.

"The eggs have hatched!" Margaret said. "There are baby wrens in the birdhouse."

I stood silent for a moment, awed by the resiliency and persistence of nature, and then—I couldn't help it—I started to laugh. I couldn't stop.

"What are you laughing at?" Margaret asked.

"I'm thinking about that poor bird."

"What about him?"

"Well, he doesn't get home until 8 in the morning. He reeks of gin and his clothes are a mess. His distraught wife has spent the night all alone bringing six or seven children into the world. She says, despairingly, 'Where were you?' He says, 'You won't believe this, but I was hit over the head and buried alive. I dug my way out, but then I was kidnapped. They forced martinis down my throat and kept me prisoner all night. I couldn't escape until this morning.' His wife, now furious, says, 'You're damned right I don't believe you. Where the *hell* have you been?'"

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